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By Sir J. H. Thynne, *fourth marquis*. "There is no  
book," says the *Spectator*, "in the English language,  
and we know of none in any other, which conveys in so  
small a compass, so much information on the subject of  
which it treats."





OBSERVATIONS  
ON  
BULGARIAN AFFAIRS



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BULGARIAN AFFAIRS

BY

THE MARQUIS OF BATH

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A DESIRE to visit some of the scenes of the late Russo-Turkish war, to see the condition of the country over which it had passed, and to witness the manner in which the people were settling down to the enjoyment of their new liberty, induced me, in company with two friends, to undertake a journey through Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia during the months of May and June 1879. The time was one of special interest for such a journey, for the country was then being evacuated by the Russian army, and the government was being transferred from the provisional administration to the Bulgarian officials. We had opportunities, therefore, of noticing the relations between the Russians and the Bulgarians, and the manner in which the latter exercised the powers for the first time entrusted to them. We had also the advantage of hearing the views of several Russian officials, of many of the leading Bulgarians, of some Englishmen, and,

above all, of some Americans long resident in the country, on whose impartiality and knowledge of the land and people thorough reliance could be placed.

We arrived at Belgrade on May 19, and after passing a few days there, went by steamer to Semendria, and travelled thence by road to Nisch, the capital of the territory recently annexed to Servia. From Nisch we continued our journey through Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia, reaching Constantinople in the first week of July. Through Servia we obtained post horses; in Bulgaria we had to hire carriages and horses from one town to the other, very much on the Italian *vetturino* system. In Servia there are hotels or khans in all the towns and large villages, sufficient for the people of the country, but hardly equal to European requirements. Both there and elsewhere we generally obtained lodging in private houses, where we were hospitably received, and found all the comforts we could reasonably expect. During the whole of our journey we never met with any of those attempts at imposition or extortion of which travellers in all countries have too often reason to complain. On the contrary, people who had rendered us trifling services avoided placing themselves in our way to receive the remuneration to which they might have considered themselves entitled.

The country through which we travelled was perfectly quiet and orderly; nor were there even

rumours of any cause for alarm, except on the south-west frontier of Bulgaria, where some apprehension was felt of a possible raid on the part of the neighbouring Turks in Macedonia. We found our pistols useless, and left them in our portmanteaus. We had no escort, except when occasionally, by the courtesy of the municipal authorities, a mounted policeman was sent with us, or in advance, to conduct us to quarters at our next halting-place. Notwithstanding the distress caused by the war, we saw no beggars till we reached Adrianople.

I am anxious to assist, if possible, in drawing public attention in England to the sentiments and true position of a people who, by no fault of their own, suffer from the fact that their cause has been the subject of a conflict between rival parties among ourselves, while their acquisition of an independent political existence has unfortunately been viewed by many as a test of the supremacy of Russian or English influence in the East. With this aim I publish the following pages, in which I have combined some results of previous and subsequent inquiry with the impressions formed by the information I was enabled to collect during our journey.

## I.

THE country inhabited exclusively or mainly by the Bulgarian people comprises the Principality of Bulgaria, the Province of Eastern Roumelia, and a considerable part of Macedonia. It was defined with substantial accuracy by the Treaty of San Stefano, though the frontier assigned to it by that treaty was here and there pushed beyond the limit of strict ethnological and historical right. There is also a large number of Bulgarians scattered through Servia, Roumania, Southern Roumelia, Bessarabia, and Austria.

The soil of what is now called the Principality of Bulgaria is generally fertile. Except on some elevated plains, such as that on which Sofia is built, the vine and mulberry, with Indian corn and every description of grain, are cultivated throughout its extent. The mode of husbandry is primitive. Previous to the war there were large herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep and goats, of which few remain. The Turks in their retreat carried off all they could lay their hands on; and of the remainder, many of those that were not purchased for the use of the Russian army perished from the cattle disease that raged in

1878. The country is fairly wooded, hilly rather than mountainous, except in the case of the Balkans. The Balkans themselves are inferior in grandeur of scenery and in actual elevation to the more celebrated mountain ranges in other parts of Europe. The country is supposed to possess great mineral wealth. At Samakow there is very valuable iron ore; and coal, it is said, can be found within reach. The southern province of Eastern Roumelia is more especially rich and fertile. It possesses extensive rice fields, the right of cultivating which was formerly reserved exclusively to the Turks; and the rose gardens of Carlovo, Kezanlik, and other places to the south of the Balkans, have supplied Europe as well as the East with otto of roses. In the towns of this province there is more appearance of wealth than in the Principality of Bulgaria. There are also more large farms, and a more numerous middle class. With the exception of some of the Greek provinces, it was probably the most prosperous, and had the best educated and most intelligent population of any portion of the Turkish Empire.

Little reliance can be placed on any statistics in the Turkish dominions, where, a great portion of the taxation being based on population, every village and every religious community has had a direct interest in understating its numbers, so as to reduce the amount it could be called on to contribute. It is difficult, therefore, to form any just estimate of the numbers of the Bulgarian

people. By Ubicini, in his 'État présent de l'Empire Ottoman,' they were said to number 3,000,000. Most authorities, however, now put them as high as from 4,000,000 to 5,000,000; and Kanitz, in 1875, estimated them at over 6,000,000. One who has given much attention to the matter, both in personal observation and in studying the various authorities on the subject, considers the Christian Bulgarian population to amount to—

In the Principality . . . . .	2,600,000
In Eastern Roumelia . . . . .	1,250,000
In Macedonia, where they form rather more than half the total population . . . . .	900,000
In Servia, Roumania, including the Dobrudtcha .	100,000
In Southern Roumelia and elsewhere, including Bessarabia, and a few in Austria . . . . .	150,000
In all about . . . . .	5,000,000

The Bulgarians may be described as a population of landowners, holding tenaciously to long-established customs and laws, and to social institutions more democratic than those which prevail in any of the older established European countries. They have been accustomed to a large amount of local self-government; for whatever may have been the oppression of the Porte, it contemptuously allowed them, by communal and municipal institutions of their own, to settle their internal affairs among themselves. They are without an aristocracy, without a landlord class, or any upper class living on realised pro-



perty and able to devote itself, according to the taste of its members, to amusement, to art and literature, or to the affairs of state. Their language has no expressions to mark the acknowledgment of a superior rank; for the titles assumed by the Turkish authorities were borrowed from the Turkish language, and will not be adopted by the free Bulgarians in their intercourse with one another. The country has no traditions of feudalism, and none of the bitter memories they engender. It is free from that antagonism of classes, and that bitter hostility between parties which constitute the present weakness and threaten the destruction of more prosperous and older established States. Conditions so unusual render the progress of a people under them a matter of interest, even to those who do not look on them as affording any guarantee of ultimate success.

It is very difficult to describe with any precision the tenure by which land is held in the Turkish Empire. Whatever may have been the original Mussulman laws, or the edicts issued by the Porte under the pressure of the European Powers, a pasha or powerful local bey has had no difficulty in setting them aside when they clashed with his own interests. Generally speaking, both in the Principality of Bulgaria and in Eastern Roumelia the land belongs to the cultivators. A system of peasant proprietorship may be said to prevail, and almost invariably the houses occupied by the peasants are their own

property. There are, however, many large estates belonging to Turkish beys and even to Bulgarians, where the peasants possess a sort of tenant right, amounting to a considerable interest in the soil, and the cultivation is on the *métayer* system, the proprietor furnishing the seed corn, sometimes the oxen or buffaloes, and, less frequently, the rude implements of husbandry, and drawing, as compensation for the cattle and use of the implements, a proportion of the produce, varying from 40 to 80 per cent. In the valley of the Maritza, and in the rich valleys between Sofia and Tatar Bazardjik there are farms of about 500 acres, cultivated by the hired labour of the peasants who reside in the contiguous villages. But the peasants assert that these farms belonged to them at some time more or less remote, and have been either illegally seized by neighbouring Turkish proprietors, or wrung from them by usurers, into whose power they had fallen, to meet the fiscal demands of the government in times of scarcity, or the exactions of some more than ordinarily rapacious governor. In the western portion of Bulgaria, as in Servia, a communal system prevails, similar to that in Little Russia. The land of the commune or parish is held in common, and the heads of families divide it by ballot at fixed periods among themselves, the male inhabitants of the village above a certain age being alone considered in the distribution. In Macedonia land is held partly on the *métayer*

system, partly by peasant proprietors. But these last are rapidly diminishing under the pressure of the heavy taxation, which puts them at the mercy of the usurers, among whom are many Greeks and Jews, who of late years have acquired large properties; and in many cases Turkish beys, on some flimsy legal pretext, or without any excuse at all, have taken forcible possession of the land belonging to the Bulgarians, whom they have compelled to cultivate it for them.

In judging the character of the Bulgarians, the conditions under which they have so long lived must be taken into account; nor is it fair to compare them with the inhabitants of countries whose governments have devoted to their well-being the time and energy which the Turks have apparently employed solely in the degradation of those subject to their rule.

The Bulgarians are essentially a hard-working and industrious people. Most of the mason's and carpenter's work in Servia is done by them; and they migrate in large numbers both to that country and to Roumania for harvest work. They are honest, sober, and economical. This last virtue they are sometimes charged with possessing to an excessive degree; and it is not improbable that this should be the case with a people whose bitter experience it has been that money alone could secure their lives, their property, and their domestic honour. They are strongly bound by the ties of family, and are pre-eminently virtuous

in their family relations. On the other hand, they are said to be slow and obstinate, and keenly alive to their own interests, both as individuals and as a nation. Combining these various characteristics with the possession of great common sense, they have been not inaptly termed the Dutch of Eastern Europe.

They are a religious people, though in a formal rather than a spiritual sense. They are deeply attached to their Church, but as a national organisation as much as a religious institution. Under the government of the Turks it alone kept alive the national feeling and traditions; a proselyte from the faith was a traitor to the national cause, and accused, often not without reason, of abandoning the fortunes of his fellow-countrymen to secure the protection of the foreign Power whose religion he adopted. But since, and so far as, freedom has been acquired, the religious bond is no longer necessary to preserve national unity, for the Bulgarian name confers rights of citizenship instead of being the badge of servitude. The test now enforced is fidelity to the national cause rather than to the national faith. The Bishop of Philippopolis said to me: 'We are not proselytisers; if a Bulgarian be true to his nation, we do not ask what is his religion;' and the people are prepared to live on friendly and equal terms with the Pomaks, or Mussulman Bulgarians, if, as they hope, the latter will recognise in the community of race a bond sufficient to unite dis-

cordant religious beliefs—a hope, however, which has little prospect of being realised.

The Bulgarian Church has hardly yet awakened from the lethargy into which it fell under the Turks, and under the scarcely less oppressive domination of the Greek hierarchy. With the exception of some distinguished prelates and a certain number of priests, there is room for much improvement in the character, education, and position of its clergy. The recovery of national independence to some extent militates against its intellectual progress, by tempting the abler and more ambitious young men who might have adopted an ecclesiastical career to seek civil employment. If the nation rises again to spiritual life, its recovery will be in no small degree owing to the intellectual and devotional influence and example of a small and devoted company of American missionaries, who abandoned homes in their own land for the purpose of promoting the welfare of an uncared-for and oppressed people—alone of all the missionary bodies regardless of the political influence of their own country, or of the interests of any particular sect. If the list of their converts is not a large one—and perhaps it is well that it should be small—their work in raising the moral tone of the nation, and in aiding the regeneration of its ancient Church, will not have been less important.

The American missionaries have contributed in no small degree to foster the spirit of toleration

among the Bulgarian people. Carefully abstaining from any interference in political questions, they have thrown no impediment in the way of their converts joining the patriotic movement, which numbers some of them among its leaders. They have aroused the jealousy and excited the suspicions of no political party. In the darkest times of Turkish rule they relieved the needy and succoured the oppressed. No religious test has been imposed on admission into their schools; and there is hardly a town in Bulgaria where persons are not to be found who owe to them the advantages of a superior education. The result of their teaching has permeated all Bulgarian society, and is not the least important of the causes that have rendered the people capable of wisely using the freedom so suddenly conferred upon them.

The importance the Bulgarians attach to education, and the efforts they have made to secure it, are very remarkable, though the agitation consequent on the war has checked their progress in that direction. There is scarcely a village, certainly no large one, without a school. Those in the towns accommodate as many as 500 or 600 children, and are conducted by five or six teachers, most of whom speak at least one foreign language. Many anecdotes are told of the sacrifices the people will make to provide a superior education for their children and kinsfolk. One of the authorities at Robert College, near Con-

stantinople—an American institution of a purely unsectarian character—mentioned to me the case of a father who had to withdraw his son from the college in consequence of the destruction of his property during the war; but no sooner was he able to collect a little money during the peace consequent on the Russian occupation, than he sent the boy back to resume his studies. I made also the acquaintance of a young man, a former student at the college, who supported a younger brother there out of his scanty earnings. The managers of the institution bear witness to the hard work and plodding industry by which the Bulgarian students compensate for their deficiency in the quickness of apprehension and versatility of disposition characteristic of the Greeks.

The merchants and professional men who constitute the highest class in the community will bear comparison with men in a similar position in any other country in Europe. Those in Eastern Roumelia are the most cultivated; and there are few among them who cannot speak French, German, or English. The population of that province is generally the most refined and civilised, partly on account of its greater wealth, partly because its capital, Philippopolis, felt the influence of the Greek intellectual movement previous to the educational revival in Bulgaria.

## II.

THE best account in English of the movements that agitated the Bulgarian people during the few years preceding the late war, of the effect of that war upon them, and of their present condition and future hopes and prospects, is to be found in articles by 'an Eastern Statesman,' published in the 'Contemporary Review' in 1879 and in February 1880. In these articles, however, to which I gladly acknowledge how much I am indebted, the subject is only cursorily treated; and it is a cause for regret that the author, whose knowledge and impartiality entitle him to speak with authority, has not given his views on it to the world in a more important work.

It is not intended in these pages to enter at any length into the early history of the nation. About the year 680, the Bulgarians, probably of Finnish origin, emigrating from the banks of the Volga, crossed the Danube, and settled in the country between that river and the Balkans. It was occupied by Slavonic tribes, who submitted, with apparently little resistance, to the invaders. These latter soon became incorporated in the people they had conquered, adopted their lan-



guage, and formed with them a Slavonic nation, which retained little that was Bulgarian beyond the name. About 860 the people were converted to Christianity by the brothers Cyril and Methodius. They were engaged in constant wars with both the Greek and Latin empires of Constantinople, the last of which owed its downfall mainly to their incessant hostility. About the year 1393 they were finally conquered by the Turks; and so complete was their subjection, that not even during the Russian occupation of the country in 1829 did they make the slightest attempt to throw off the yoke.

The little consciousness they retained of national life was due to their ecclesiastical organisation only. At the period of the Turkish conquest they formed an independent branch of the Orthodox Church, and they remained in that condition, under a Patriarch of their own, till 1777, when the Patriarch of Constantinople succeeded by intrigues with the Porte in procuring the suppression of their patriarchate and their subjection to his own jurisdiction. In religious matters they then fell as completely under the domination of the Greeks as they had for several centuries been civilly and politically under that of the Turks. None but Greek bishops were appointed; the Greek took the place of the Bulgarian language in the schools and the services of the Church; Bulgarian books were everywhere destroyed, a collection of manuscripts of importance having about

this time been burnt by the Greek Bishop of Tirnova, so that no vestige of the national history or language might remain. And so successful were these attempts to Hellenize the people, that all the civilisation in Bulgaria, such as it was, became Greek; and thirty years ago the use of the Bulgarian language in the streets of Philippopolis was looked on as a sign of barbarism.

Dating from the year 1829, a few feeble insurrections occasionally broke out; but they were as much Greek as Bulgarian in their origin, and never had the sympathy or support of the mass of the people, who acquiesced in their bondage; nor did any national movement take place till after the Crimean War. It is impossible to overestimate the influence which that war exercised on the character and destinies of the Bulgarians. The European armies quartered in their country exhibited a superiority over the Turks which was not always gently asserted, and which destroyed in the minds of the people the hitherto unquestioned *prestige* of the ruling race; while the smallness of the difference in habits and education which separated the common soldier from themselves impressed them, especially the more wealthy and ambitious among them, with the idea that it would not be difficult to raise their own nation to a standard equal to that of Western Europe, and acquire for it a position of similar superiority over their Turkish masters.

From that period the educational movement,

of which there had been a few symptoms already, acquired force and vitality. The men possessed of any wealth sent their sons to colleges and universities in Russia, Roumania, and Bohemia, and to the Robert College, which has exercised a most important influence on the rising generation of Bulgarians. Schools, also, were established in all the towns and large villages ; but, as the language employed in them and the teachers appointed were Bulgarian, they encountered the bitter hostility of the Greek hierarchy, who sought to maintain the predominance of the Greek race and language, and were more intent on preserving the interests of the Patriarchate, or rather of the clique of Phanariot Greeks who ruled it, than on promoting those of the people under their charge. The school teachers, as leaders of the patriotic movement, supplanted the priests in their influence over the people, and even now, when the Church has become identified with the national cause, share with them the consideration of the peasantry ; while, as some of the political leaders have been drawn from their ranks, they possess in the towns a greater share of power than any to which the clergy can lay claim.

The first desire inspired by the national spirit which had been roused into life by the educational movement was to throw off the Greek domination and restore the Bulgarian ecclesiastical organisation suppressed in 1777. In their struggle for liberty the Bulgarians were sup-

ported by both Catholics and Protestants, anxious to weaken the Eastern Church by means of internal divisions. They were also favoured by politicians who, desirous of maintaining the Ottoman Empire, and viewing with alarm the rising energies of the Greeks, welcomed the pretensions of a Christian race numerically equal to the Greeks, and repudiating their claims to supremacy—a race which protested as loudly against the ecclesiastical tyranny of the Greeks as the Greeks professed, in the name of all its Christian subjects, to denounce the oppression of the Porte. The Turkish Government, for similar reasons, encouraged the movement. The Russians, accustomed to look on the Greeks as alone among the Christian races in the East possessed of any present strength or any hope for the future, discouraged it; and it was some time before General Ignatieff appreciated the importance of a cause to which he afterwards gave his warmest support.

This revival had, at its outset, no other object than ecclesiastical freedom; nor, till the outbreak of the late war, had the mass of the Bulgarian people, or the most influential section among them, any other. But the movement raised a desire for political freedom also, especially in the minds of the younger men, who at foreign universities had acquired the ideas, and often the revolutionary principles, of the youth of freer States, and who bore with impatience the political and social degradation which habit had

accustomed their fathers to endure. The Turks also were alarmed to see their subjects raising themselves to a level with the Western nations, whose superiority they both feared and hated; and they strove, by increased oppression, to impress them with a sense of their masters' power and of their own inferiority. Meanwhile an agitation was kept up in Bulgaria by a revolutionary committee, chiefly composed of students established at Bucharest, encouraged, it is said, by the Roumanians, and still more by the Serbians, who sought to profit by the internal difficulties of the Turkish Empire to obtain their complete emancipation from its rule. Various insurrections were attempted; but they had no support either from the peasantry or from the wealthy leaders of the educational movement, who had never seriously contemplated the possibility of deliverance from Turkish rule.

The Porte at this time adopted two measures which greatly contributed to the downfall of the government they were intended to secure.

The first was the introduction of Circassians into the country. The object of this measure was to strengthen the Mussulman preponderance by the establishment of a warlike population who could be relied on against internal revolt or foreign attack. But, in the districts affected, the Bulgarian peasantry, who in the first instance had been compelled to build houses for the immigrants, and provide them with cattle and the

means of husbandry, were rendered desperate by the requital they received. Abjectly submissive under the immemorial oppression of the Turkish rule, which in ordinary times avoided disturbing an industry essential to the treasury of the Porte, they were roused to ideas of resistance by the ferocity of the newly imported tribe — by the wholesale spoliation of their property, the plundering, or ransoming to save from plunder, of their villages, the frequent murders, the abductions of children to be disposed of in Turkish harems. Nor was the hostility provoked among the Bulgarian peasantry balanced by any corresponding gain to the Porte; for when the war broke out there was hardly an instance in which the Turkish army derived any advantage from the presence of these Circassian auxiliaries.

The second measure, even more fatal in its consequences than the first, was the appointment of Midhat Pasha, about the year 1864, and again about 1867, to be Governor of Rustchuk. As Governor of Tirnova, in 1858, he had displayed great administrative ability. As Governor of Nisch, an appointment he received in 1860, he has left behind him the reputation of having maintained order and suppressed brigandage; while a hospital, a Mussulman school, and certain roads, constructed during his tenure of power, are almost the only works of public utility that illustrate the last two hundred years of Turkish domination. He sought to secure for the Turks some of the advan-

tages of European civilization, and the sympathy that attends their possession; he was willing to protect the Bulgarians so long as they were contented to remain the humble cultivators of the soil, producing the wealth whereon the Porte depended for a main portion of its revenues; but when he recognised the facility with which the hitherto despised Rayah was raising himself by industry, by economy, and by an extending and improving system of education, to a level with European nations, he determined to suppress with a strong hand all attempts at individual equality, all desire for national independence, on the part of the subject race. He profited by a miserable and unsuccessful insurrection to hang or to exile, not only all those whom he suspected of being in correspondence with the revolutionary committees, but all who, on account of their superior education and position, might be supposed to bear with impatience the subjection of their country, or to wish well to those who sought its deliverance. In short, he endeavoured to crush the national revival, and by every means in his power to force the people back to their former abject condition. He is accused of having established at Rustchuk *cafés chantants* and other institutions of a worse character, in order to destroy the purity of Bulgarian family life; and with such success that a Bulgarian of education, holding an important position under the new Government, whose information I found generally

accurate, and whose views were moderate, informed me that there was hardly a family, Bulgarian, Greek, or Jewish, in that town that had escaped corruption.

The measures taken by Midhat Pasha might thirty or forty years earlier have stamped all life out of the nation. But he came too late. The only result of his policy was to drive from the country the young men of ambition, of superior intelligence and education, who, establishing themselves in Roumania, in Russia, and in Austria, joined the revolutionary committees, and maintained a correspondence with their countrymen at home, whom they constantly urged to revolt. By rendering the existing state of things impossible, they hoped to bring about a crisis whereby the ultimate freedom of their country might be secured.

In the year 1875 the general position of the Bulgarian people may be thus described:—The peasantry were in a state of torpor, acquiescing in a subjection from which they saw no prospect of deliverance. The wealthy citizens, and those who might be deemed the leaders of the national party, were engrossed by the ecclesiastical question, and a desire to throw off the Greek domination: to the possibility of freedom from Turkish rule they gave no attention, regarding it as a vision incapable of realisation. A few ardent young men were in communication with the committees at Bucharest and elsewhere; while a



certain number of persons rendered desperate by oppression were always at hand, ready to be the agents in any disturbance, however hopeless might be its prospects of ultimate success.

The first revolt broke out in Bosnia and the Herzegovina in 1875. Due in the main to the incurable vice of Ottoman rule, it received its initiative from Austria. On her part it was the first step in the carrying out of a deep-laid policy, of which England and Russia have been alternately the dupes, and the Turks and the Christian races in the East among the victims, the list of whom is probably not yet completed. The continuance of the revolt, the incapacity shown by the Turkish Government in dealing with it, the apparent sympathy of every government in Europe, except that of England, threw the Slave races into a ferment, and induced them to believe that the hour of their deliverance was at hand. The Servians, encouraged by Germany, and by a powerful party in Russia, prepared to avail themselves of the opportunity to shake off the last vestige of their subjection, and to deliver the remainder of their countrymen from the Turkish rule. The Bulgarian committees at Bucharest and elsewhere, sharing in the general enthusiasm, proceeded to organise insurrections. What encouragement they received from Servia or from a party in Russia it is difficult to know; but little was needed to urge them forward. They sent agents through the country to make prepara-

tions; but their plans soon became known to the Turkish Government, which had information some months beforehand of the time when the outbreak was to take place. Except by arming the Mussulmans and arousing their fanaticism, the Porte took no steps: on the contrary, it indirectly encouraged the agitators. Its object was very intelligible. It expected a war with Servia; it feared a Bulgarian rising in the rear of its army; it desired, therefore, to strike such a blow at the Bulgarians before the war broke out as to preclude any possibility of future danger from that quarter. The policy was successful. Any tendency to revolt or insurrection was effectually crushed, nor did the Porte suffer annoyance from the Bulgarians during the course of the Servian war. But other, and to the Turks most unexpected, results were produced. The indignation roused by the story of the massacres overpowered the diplomacy that was still anxious to sustain the traditional policy of upholding the Turkish Empire; and since that time the action of every European Power, whatever may have been the declarations of ministers and diplomatists, has had but one result, the supersession and disintegration of a government capable of deliberately sanctioning such atrocities.

It is unnecessary to describe the horrors enacted at Batak, Perushtitza, Panagurishte, and elsewhere. Mr. Baring's temperate and judicial report has in the main been corro-

borated by all impartial testimony. Turkey stands condemned by the public opinion of Europe. From the date of the massacres commenced the last stage in her decline, which is proceeding at a rate more rapid than the Power supposed to be her bitterest enemy desires. But it has never been sufficiently realised that these massacres and the unmanly outrages that accompanied them were not the spontaneous acts of a panic-stricken peasantry, or of a fanatic soldiery, in the crisis of a real or imaginary national peril; they were the result of deliberate orders from Constantinople, carried out by the pashas and other officials. Chefket Pasha, whose exceptional barbarity compelled even the English Government to demand his punishment, has escaped all retribution, and has been entrusted with several high commands, one of which he held till quite lately. The reason is simple—he still possesses the authority from the Porte whereby he can justify all his proceedings. The violence done to the village schoolmistress, called in derision by the Turks the Queen of the Bulgarians, was the act neither of a soldier nor of a Bashi-Bazouk, but of the mudir, or chief local magistrate.

Much importance has been attached to the observations which some of the Russian officers and soldiers are reported to have made on the amount of apparent wealth they found in the possession of the Bulgarian peasantry; and the inference has been drawn that ordinary Turkish rule was

not so intolerable as had been supposed, and that European opinion, misled by a few exceptional acts of severity—the result of panic—had done it injustice. It is unnecessary to inquire how far the tone and meaning of the remarks in question were correctly apprehended, or how far they proceeded from men belonging to that large section of Russian society who from the first disapproved the movement which resulted in the war of 1877. There is a more direct answer. The flocks and herds may have been numerous, for the country is fertile and the people are industrious; but the produce did not go to the people. From the wealth they created they derived little enjoyment. It went to the Porte, to the pasha, to the bey. Agricultural wealth by no means invariably testifies to the well-being of a people; that of Egypt is unsurpassed in the world, yet the fellaheen who cultivate the land have barely enough bread to stave off hunger, and have not the rags with which to clothe their nakedness. The main charge against Turkish rule; then as now, was, that under it there was no safety, no security for life, person, or property; that the Christian's evidence was not received by the tribunals; that the Christian could not obtain justice against a Mussulman; that neither the life of any Christian man nor the honour of any Christian woman was safe; and that at any moment they might see their daughters carried off to a Turkish harem. Not that every man was murdered, or

every woman outraged, or the country continuously pillaged—under such conditions life would have been impossible, the population would have ceased to exist—but that there was no security, no justice. The hand of the Government was the hand of the oppressor; the judge or governor from whom protection might be sought was himself the agent of injustice; the visit of the *zaptieh*, the professed guardian of order, was more dreaded than that of the robber. Not only such writers as Ranke, in his ‘History of Servia,’ Mr. Denton, Miss Irby and Miss Mackenzie, Bianconi, in his ‘*Vérité sur la Turquie*,’ Mr. Barkley the engineer, but also the greater portion of the consular reports to the British embassy at Constantinople between the years 1860 and 1875, certainly inspired by no spirit of hostility to the Turks, fully bear out this description. The people were completely cowed. In the contemptuous language of those who observed their degradation, but did not care to inquire into its causes, they trembled like sheep at the presence of a Turk, submitted to his indignities, and gave up their wives and daughters to his will; nor did they recover the consciousness of manhood till the presence of the Russian armies raised them out of the despair into which they had been cast by the increased rigour of their masters, who were embittered by the consciousness of departing power.

## III.

GREAT as was the sensation the massacres of 1876 created in Europe, they provoked the animosity of the Bulgarians in a less degree than did what they believed to be the deliberate attempt of the Turkish Government to exterminate the whole accessible portion of the Bulgarian male population, during the period between the repulse of General Gourko's raid across the Balkans and the final passage of the Russian army. At this time there were constant executions. In Sofia as many as fifty, in Philippopolis sixty, men were hanged in one day; and similar scenes took place daily in other towns. Those who suffered were not ignorant peasants (not that their being so would have been any justification), but the best educated, the wealthiest, the most peaceably disposed of the population—doctors, lawyers, merchants, men in intelligence and habits of life on a level with similar classes in England or any Western country. When Ahmed Vefik Pasha, at the request of the European ambassadors, was sent to Philippopolis to stop the executions, Suleiman Pasha honoured his

arrival by hanging five or six Bulgarians before his konak, and boasted that he had orders from Constantinople in justification of his conduct. What is now called Eastern Roumelia was especially the scene of these proceedings ; and when the refusal of its inhabitants to recognise the symbols of the Sultan's authority, and their opposition to the return of the Turkish refugees, are under consideration, the fearful sufferings inflicted on them by the Turkish Government and population during this period have to be taken into account.

Many persons used to be under the impression that the Bashi-Bazouks were some warlike and barbarous race, like the Zebecks and Circassians, imported into the country by the Turks, and attached as irregular troops to their army. They are nothing of the kind. They are simply the ordinary Turkish peasantry, armed and undisciplined, who, gathering round the army, are of little use against an enemy in the field, but terrible to the unarmed population of the districts through which the army passes. They were the chief actors in the scenes of horror during the years 1876 and 1877, in which, however, the regular troops cannot be acquitted of having shared.

During our journey we were incessantly meeting with terrible evidence of the policy of the Turkish Government, and of the proceedings of its agents, the Bashi-Bazouks and the troops. At

Bania, a small village east of Samakow, we met a man who, from mere jealousy of his superior education and position, had been exiled to Asia, having narrowly escaped death. We travelled thence in company with a man and his wife and child; the man had been condemned to death, but escaped through the intervention of a European Consul; the child was an orphan they had adopted, its parents having perished in the massacres. At Tatar Bazardjik the greater part of the Christian quarter had been destroyed by the Turks, and so had been a number of villages round Philippopolis. We visited Carlovo, the scene of one of the most fearful tragedies of 1877. Before that time it was one of the most prosperous towns in Eastern Roumelia, inhabited by a number of wealthy Bulgarian merchants. On the Russian army crossing the Danube, the Turkish and Christian inhabitants drew up a compact which they signed and sealed, undertaking the mutual protection of one another in the event of troops from either army occupying the place. When General Gourko advanced across the Balkans a party of Cossacks occupied the town: the Turks were in no way molested. On the approach of the Turkish army, the Christians, relying on the agreement, remained in imaginary security. But the Turks of the town, joining with the regular troops, the Bashi-Bazouks, and the Circassians, proceeded at once to plunder their houses, which they stripped of



everything. A general massacre then ensued, in which 1,500 persons, including refugees from the neighbouring villages, who had sought protection there, are said to have perished. The Turks occupied the place for about four months, during which time they completed the work of plunder, and, searching for the male inhabitants, dragged them from their places of concealment, and either killed them on the spot, or took them to Philippopolis to be hanged. The fate of a Doctor Popoff deserves particular mention. The ill-usage he received on the road to Philippopolis (including the putting out of his eye) drove him mad; on his recovery he was marched back to Carlovo, it is said barefooted, and was hanged. There are said to be over 800 widows in Carlovo; 864 were represented in the petition to the European Commission—many of them the widows of wealthy merchants and tradesmen, brought up in comparative luxury, who having seen their husbands, sons, and fathers murdered, are for the most part reduced to absolute poverty, dependent for their daily subsistence on the little they can earn by spinning. A number of them, dressed in mourning, met us as we left the town, begging us to use our influence with ‘the noble English people’ to prevent the return of the Turks, and to save the children from what had been their parents’ fate. Here, and elsewhere, I was impressed by observing how little the people dwelt on their past sufferings; their minds seemed to

be engrossed with hope—a hope which, on the part of the inhabitants of Eastern Roumelia, was not unmixed with anxiety for the future.

There was one subject to which I dared not allude when at Carlovo; but at the next town we reached I asked what had been the fate of the women during the occupation of the place by the Turks. The reply was that no one had escaped outrage—a statement borne out by such information as I was able to obtain elsewhere.

At Carlovo we met three gentlemen, who alone of the principal residents had escaped the massacre. One left immediately before the entry of the Turks, to protect his wife, who was at Kalofer: they escaped together across the Balkans to Tirnova, the lady being confined in the mountains during their flight. Another happened to be absent at Bucharest on business. How the third escaped we were not told. The refinement and intelligence of these gentlemen struck me so forcibly that I inquired if there had been many of their own condition in the town. They replied, ‘Numbers; the whole flower of our population perished.’ We heard many anecdotes exemplifying the condition of the Christians under Turkish rule. Long previous to the excitement aroused by the war, or the abortive attempts at insurrection, none of them, whatever his condition, could walk in the streets without being insulted, or incurring the risk of being beaten; nor did they ever venture among the mountains,

for fear of being waylaid by the Turks. The father of one had been murdered while passing through a Turkish village; but for the murder no redress could be obtained. The shop or warehouse of another had been three times robbed with impunity.

By the publication of the despatches of subordinate diplomatic agents in the English blue books, an attempt has been made to excite European feeling against a people who have witnessed such scenes and undergone such sufferings, because they object to the return of that Turkish population amongst whom each family of them would recognise the authors of its partial or complete ruin, every widow a participator in her husband's murder. Importance has been attached to a rumour that the inhabitants of Carlovo opposed the return of the Jews to their homes. The facts of the case are that during the massacres the Jews pointed out to the Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians the houses of the wealthiest inhabitants, and afterwards bought the plunder from them. The Jews, it was reported, would be allowed to return, and they have probably gone back by this time; but the people have entered into a compact to have no dealings of any kind with them. In this place we heard a reason why consuls with even the best intentions have had so much difficulty in obtaining trustworthy information on the condition of Christians subject to Turkish rule. The Turks, we were told, had

spies everywhere ; and any Christian seen talking with a stranger was certain to be made to suffer for doing so.

Not far from Carlovo are the ruins of what was once the still wealthier town of Kalofer. It was inhabited by a purely Christian population, and contained six churches, a school for boys and another for girls, accommodating respectively eight hundred and four hundred pupils. To judge from the sites they covered, they must have been important buildings. All are now destroyed, and nothing remains but the parts of three churches, one with a marble iconostasis still in good preservation. In Carlovo the inhabitants were massacred, but the buildings spared. In Kalofer the inhabitants generally escaped, there being fortunately no Turkish residents on a compact with whom they could with fatal security rely. They all, on the approach of the Turkish army, fled to the mountains, the formation of the ground favouring their escape, as the Balkans here break off into a succession of wooded hills, while Carlovo lies immediately under the steep and bare face of one of the highest parts of the range, the ascent of which must be made in full view of those below. Kalofer was bombarded, then plundered and burnt ; of the inhabitants, the few who remained were massacred, but the bulk made their way to Tirnova, although some hundreds of old people and children perished during the flight.

At Kezanlik the greater part of the Christian quarter has been destroyed, though the Turks spared some of the best houses as quarters for their officers. Here, again, we had evidence of the insecurity of the Christians under Turkish rule. Our host, one of the largest exporters of otto of roses—the staple produce of this and the adjoining district—who, in the interests of his commerce, makes annual visits to most of the European capitals, told us that his father was killed by the Turks less than twenty years ago, without any provocation on his part; nor was it possible to bring the perpetrators of the murder to justice.

Shipka, a large Christian village, has also been completely destroyed; but, as military considerations may have dictated the proceeding, it is possibly more excusable than others we had witnessed.

The horrors that took place at Eski Zagra, a place we were unable to visit, equalled those at Carlovo, and the loss of human life was far greater. An English gentleman, who was there in June 1879, said that even then it was like a charnel house, strewn everywhere with human bones. It was taken possession of by the Russians after General Gourko's first advance. During the first three days of their occupation there was a good deal of confusion, after which time order was established under a provisional government. The town was full of peasantry from the neigh-

bouring villages, all plundered, many ill-treated and wounded by the Bashi-Bazouks; and it is possible that some of them profited by the temporary disorder to avenge the injuries they had received. Some Turks were also executed for firing on the Russians from their houses. The American missionaries, who were present during the whole period, estimate at sixty, or at most, at one hundred, the total number of Turks who perished from these and other causes; and even a Turkish mollah, whose evidence was taken by a gentleman who visited the place, estimated them at no more than three hundred; whereas the Turkish authorities, quoted by their friends in Europe, give 1,500 as the number of Mussulmans who were killed during the Russian occupation. The missionaries witnessed no case of mob violence on the part of the Bulgarians, except against a Bulgarian woman who had lived as mistress with a son of Ali Bey, the richest proprietor in those parts. On the entry of the Russians the mob attacked her house; she found a refuge with the missionaries, who, in return for the protection afforded her, afterwards owed their safety to Ali Bey's family. On the retreat of the Russians the place was retaken by the Turks, when a massacre ensued, in which, according to the missionaries, at least 6,000, and probably a much larger number, perished. Suleiman Pasha, who was in command, ordered the surviving women and children, all the Turkish population,

and the missionaries, to leave the town and retire to some hills in the neighbourhood. He then set fire to the town, and after the expelled inhabitants had remained twenty-four hours, and seen it totally consumed, they were allowed to depart.

The conduct of the Turks with regard to Yeni Zagra was, if possible, still worse. On the advance of the Russians, Reouf Pasha, who commanded the Turkish forces, advised the principal people of the town to withdraw to Adrianople, as he was about to retire there himself, and was no longer able to protect them against the Bashi-Bazouks. They took his advice, and went there. After General Gourko's repulse, Reouf Pasha having departed elsewhere, the Governor of Adrianople sent to these people to say that he would give them passports authorising their return to Yeni Zagra, if they would present themselves before him. On their doing so he caused them to be thrown into prison: some were exiled to Asia; of the others some were taken out every day and hanged till all had been executed. One was a doctor, who had attached himself to the hospital, where he worked in attendance on the Turkish sick and wounded. He was taken thence, with the red crescent on his arm, and hanged with his fellow-citizens.

At Slievno a great part of the Christian quarter, nearly a third of the town, had been destroyed by the Turks on their retreat. We

lodged with a widow, now extremely poor, whose husband, one of the wealthiest men in the place, had died in exile in Asia Minor, after having been stripped of nearly all he possessed. At Jamboli many Bulgarians were living in Turkish houses, the greater part of the Christian and Jewish quarters having been destroyed, together with the railway station. The Turks, with their usual improvidence, had left uninjured the bridge over the river, the destruction of which might have impeded an advancing army. Numbers of women in this town had been outraged, several of whom had died in consequence of the treatment to which they had been subjected.

It is some gratification to vary the account of all these miseries by the testimony of the Bulgarians to the exceptional conduct of two Turkish pashas—Reouf Pasha, the present Governor of Adrianople, whose justice and humanity all recognise, and Osman Pasha, the defender of Plevna, and now War Minister. Shortly after the Russians crossed the Danube, the Bulgarian and Mussulman notables of Plevna sent a deputation to the Russian head-quarters to ask that the town might be occupied, to protect it from the Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians, who were laying waste the country occupied by neither army. As is well known, Osman Pasha took possession of the place before the Russian detachment arrived. The Turks immediately accused the Bulgarians of treasonable communication with the enemy,



saying that by fear of violence alone had they themselves been induced to join the deputation, and demanding the instant execution of the traitors. Osman Pasha replied: 'You all acted from the same motive, to secure protection from pillage. If blame is to attach to anyone, it is not to the Christians, who naturally wished well to people of their own faith, but to you who were false to your religion and country; and if I hang them, I ought certainly to hang you also.' He did the Bulgarians no harm; nor did he permit their houses or property to be pillaged or destroyed during the siege.

To escape from the Turkish army the mass of the Bulgarian population under the southern slope of the Balkans took refuge in the mountains. Some of them, to avoid perishing from cold and starvation during the winter, attempted to return to their villages. As soon, however, as they descended into the plain the men were pitilessly killed, and the women and children taken possession of by the Turkish troops and peasantry.

Most of these painful narratives have already been published; but it is not inopportune to recall them to public attention, because on the scenes they recount, and on others similar to them, is founded the deep-seated belief on the part of the Bulgarians, to which allusion has been already made, that the Turkish Government has sought to exterminate their race. The belief is shared

by impartial foreigners who had accurate information of what was going on; and when the present relations between the Turks and Bulgarians are considered, that belief and the causes on which it is based ought not to be forgotten.

The bulk of the Turkish inhabitants, especially those living in the districts where the population was mixed, accompanied and preceded their armies in the retreat before the Russian advance immediately after the fall of Plevna. In doing this, they acted under the orders of the Turkish Government and the advice of its commanders, who excited their alarm as to the fate that might await them should they fall into the hands of the Russians. Many also may have justly feared reprisals on the part of the Bulgarians for what they had suffered at their hands. They took with them their wives and families, their sheep and cattle, and all their goods. They pillaged the Bulgarian villages in their neighbourhood, and such as lay in the line of their retreat, outraging the women with unheard-of atrocity, and killing the men who attempted to resist the pillage of their goods or to protect their wives and daughters from dishonour. The sufferings of the Turkish fugitives were fearful during their flight over the mountains in the dead of winter. Plundered by the Circassians who accompanied them, they perished from cold and hunger by thousands. When they reached Constantinople and other places of refuge, their losses were still

greater from typhus and other diseases, due to the crowding together in the mosques and other places where they could find shelter, and to the insufficiency of the food with which the Turkish Government and the various relief societies were able to supply them. They suffered little at the hands of the Bulgarians, who were intent on their own safety, and on preserving what property remained to them after the pillage, and who besides were unarmed, and remained so till long after the Russian occupation, so that they were in no position to molest the Turks, who had abundance of weapons.

The Turks who remained were protected by the Russians, and generally unmolested by the Bulgarians. There were a few cases where old scores were paid off on neighbouring Turkish villages, but they were not numerous. There may have been more isolated acts of agrarian outrage on Turkish proprietors, in revenge for long years of grinding personal tyranny, kidnapping of daughters, and confiscation of land and property; but on the whole the Turks were then, and have been subsequently, well treated; and they testified to that effect to persons who visited them in the spring of 1879, acknowledging that they had nothing to complain of.

It is perfectly true that, except when occupied by Bulgarians, the houses abandoned by the Turks have been almost invariably destroyed—partly in order to use the materials for fuel,

partly in revenge for the destruction of the Bulgarian houses, and with the idea also, in all probability, of creating an obstacle to the return of the former inhabitants.

It has been said that the sufferings of the Bulgarians during the years 1876 and 1877 were so intense, so much in excess of the results of ordinary Turkish misgovernment, that the people had no reason to be grateful for a deliverance attained at so fearful a cost. This is not the opinion of the Bulgarians themselves. They think the acquisition of liberty well purchased at the price of all the sufferings, terrible as they were, by which it was preceded. At Ak-Palanka, a Bulgarian village in the district ceded to Servia, almost entirely destroyed by the Turks previous to their retreat, one of the principal inhabitants said to me, 'We thank God for having induced the Turks to bring the Circassians among us, for without their excesses the Powers would never have interfered, and we should not have obtained our freedom.' From men escaped from the massacres, and still marked with the scars of the wounds then received, from others who had lost their fortunes and seen their children and parents murdered, we always received the same sort of answer when we asked their opinion on the sufferings they had undergone and the results they had obtained: 'A storm has passed over us, but now it is finished, and we are free.' This answer,

given with hope and confidence in Bulgaria, but in Eastern Roumelia tempered by a strong feeling of insecurity as to the future, represents the sentiments of every Bulgarian.

In England, where, in spite of apparent differences of principle, the public welfare is ordinarily well cared for by every Administration, where victors and vanquished after a party conflict are often astonished at the smallness of the result effected by some measure bitterly fought out between them, and where some particular policy may find its strongest supporters to-day among those who most violently denounced it a few years ago, people can little appreciate the terrible reality in the politics of Eastern Europe. Identifying the Sultan with their own Sovereign, and the Turkish pashas and proprietors with their own nobility, they forget that to his Christian subjects the Sultan is a foreign despot; that the Turkish officials and local chiefs utilise their power and position to carry on a system of oppression beyond even the limits of their own one-sided and iniquitous laws; while the only care of the Government is to drain the provinces for the support of an effete Court and its hangers-on at Constantinople. Doubtful how far the interests of freedom have been promoted by the lowering of the franchise at home, Englishmen forget that in countries under Turkish rule liberty does not signify a vote for a member of Parlia-

ment, or a mere extension of the democratic element in the government of the country, but means security for life, person, and property, protection to the honour of women, and immunity from the grossest and most intolerable outrages.

## IV.

THE recent acquisition of a military character and of personal courage by the Bulgarians, whose submissive timidity, not to say abject cowardice, was formerly the theme of all observers, is a fact as undoubted as it is extraordinary. The Russian officers bear willing testimony to the excellence of the Bulgarian militia, and to the fact that the legion, hastily raised during the late war, fought with all the steadiness and devotion of veteran soldiers. Proud of the privilege of bearing arms, and anxious to acquire a knowledge of their use, the inhabitants of the Principality readily join the ranks of the militia; and when I was in Eastern Roumelia the gymnastic societies, called sometimes the National Guard, a corps of volunteers embodying the whole male population between the ages of seventeen and forty, might be seen daily at their drill.

The development of the political intelligence of the people is no less remarkable. Every man amongst them is a politician, interested in the position of his country, its future prospects, and its present difficulties; aware that it has a part to perform in which each individual has his share,

and recognising the obligation to perform his own to the best of his abilities. All spectators at the first Assembly at Tirmova were struck by the intelligence and independence displayed by its members, and the facility with which they adopted parliamentary forms and established order in their proceedings.

There must be sterling qualities innate in the Bulgarian race, to enable them suddenly to develop personal courage and self-respect, and, without acknowledged leaders or administrative experience, to give proof of so much sagacity as they have shown in their first attempts at self-government. It is no discredit to them that there have been external influences, by which they have known how to profit, that have aided this development. The patient labour of the American missionaries, Robert College, and the foreign universities, have all borne a share in their intellectual and moral advancement. But the principal credit in the regeneration of the Bulgarian people must be given to the exertions of the Russian governor, and to the administration under him.

The governor, Prince Dondoukoff Korsakoff, devoted himself with entire singleness of purpose, and oblivious of the interests (certainly in the narrower sense) of his own country, to the creation of a national life and a political organisation among this hitherto down-trodden people. He found everything in confusion; he introduced order, and formed an administration. This



administration, it is true, he put under Russian officials ; but he based it on the municipal and communal system, by means of which, apart from Turkish laws and officials, the Bulgarians had managed their own affairs ; and thus he incorporated into it the most intelligent and leading men among them. When the Russians withdrew, in June 1879, there was no difficulty in supplying their place by Bulgarians who had acquired some amount of administrative experience. Prince Dondoukoff raised, equipped, and organised an army ; with a system of reserves, under Russian officers, many of whom have naturalised themselves to continue in the Bulgarian service. At the same time he gave commissions to all Bulgarians at all competent to hold them, and established a school at Sofia for the education of officers, so that with the least possible delay they might become independent of Russian or any other assistance, and select from among themselves the commanders of their battalions. Everything had to be done, everything was done, by him. He organised the civil service, the judiciary, the police, the army. He took measures for the improvement of the towns ; and nothing that concerned the future well-being of the people was too trivial to engage his attention. But he did more than all this. Together with the sentiment of national independence, he strove successfully to infuse into the minds of the people a feeling of personal self-respect and self-confi-

dence. I met at his table Bulgarian officers who but a few months before had been simple peasants, and who were received on equal terms with the highest Russian officials. On his first assuming the government, the peasantry, on his passage through their villages, used to prostrate themselves before him, as was their habit before Turkish pashas. After a few months they changed this custom for that of standing with their eyes bent towards the ground, and their arms folded across their breasts (an Oriental mode of saluting a superior); and a few months later still, they contented themselves with raising their kalpacks, looking him boldly in the face. When he surrendered his authority to the elected Prince, he handed over to him an army, an administration, above all a self-confident and well-ordered people. In the success of his work—and it will succeed if the diplomacy of Europe gives it a chance—his name will probably be forgotten, and it will seem as if an order of things so carefully and well established was the result of the regular development of centuries, instead of being in a pre-eminent measure due to the genius of a single man, and the work of a few months.

Undoubtedly the Russian administration contributed in their degree to this success. The simplicity of their habits of life, the total absence of pretension or 'morgue' in their dispositions, and a certain democratic spirit which, in spite of the absolute nature of its Government, permeates

Russian society, enabled them to live on equal and familiar terms with the leading Bulgarians. They were thus able to enlist their concurrence and assistance in utilising the materials that existed for the formation of an administrative organisation, which, if not in itself all that might be desired, is not too complicated for the people to understand, or of too costly a nature for the country to support. Nor should the influence of the Russian army be forgotten. Of the same religion, and speaking nearly the same language as the people, and accustomed in their own country to live in quarters, the soldiers soon made themselves at home in the houses on which they were billeted. Kind to the children, taking their share in the work of the house and of the farm, gentle and generally well conducted, their conduct formed a striking contrast to the brutality with which the Turks had behaved. They won the goodwill and affection of the peasantry, and communicated to them a share of their own national pride and confidence in themselves, their army, and Emperor, and helped to raise in their minds the sentiments of personal courage and national spirit.

It has sometimes been represented that there was a bad feeling between the Russians and Bulgarians, and that the departure of the provisional administration and of the army of occupation occasioned unquestionable satisfaction to both. No doubt the Russian Government was not per-

fect; but too great laxity is the error with which it is chargeable, not undue severity. The Bulgarians complained of the large salaries received by the Russian officials—not excessive when the expenses they were put to, increased by their distance from home, are taken into account, but too great a burthen on the finances of the new State. Those who hoped to fill the vacant places welcomed the departure of the Russian officials; while the substitution of Bulgarians for them brought home to the people generally the reality of their independence. But the army was universally regretted. Popular with the people, and on the best terms with the national militia, it was a guarantee of peace and order, and a protection against Turkish inroads from across the border, and against Turkish insurrection within. The Bulgarians are well aware that without foreign officers their troops cannot be rendered efficient. They welcome the presence of such officers, provided it does not menace their independence; and there are none who can amalgamate with them so easily as the Russians. I had opportunities of seeing the relations between the Russian officers commanding the battalions and the influential Bulgarians; and also between the Russian non-commissioned officers and the peasantry; and I can answer for the best feeling existing on both sides. That complaints should be made of the appointments in the Bulgarian provisional administration formed by the Russians on their

departure, was the inevitable consequence of there being three claimants for every place to be filled. The official salaries also, and the cost of the administration, were fixed at too high a scale. But the main fact must ever be present in the minds of the Bulgarians, that to the Russian armies they owe their deliverance from the Turks ; and that after an oppression of centuries, the Russian administration, whatever may have been its shortcomings, was the first which made the welfare of the people its object, gave them personal liberty and equality, and security of life, person, and property.

It is very easy to form an erroneous impression from the gratification many among the Russians are supposed to have expressed on leaving Bulgaria. The troops, of course, were impatient to return to their homes and families, from which most of them had been absent for periods varying from one to three years ; and a preference openly expressed for their own country by no means implied disgust or dissatisfaction with the country they were quitting. To those of them who belonged to the large section of Russian society which from the commencement had disapproved the war, the return home occasioned unalloyed pleasure. Some few who in the hope of military glory desired a continuance of the contest, and some few also who hoped by a prolonged occupation to annex Bulgaria to their own country, felt and expressed considerable dissatis-

faction and disappointment at leaving. But there was a large number of military officers and of civil officials, among whom was the governor, Prince Dondoukoff, who had in view solely the welfare of a kindred nation. They did not grudge to the Principality the enjoyment of an independence for which it had been their work to prepare her, and only regretted that, from causes beyond their own control, they were unable to leave the whole Bulgarian race in the possession of all the liberty they had desired to secure for it.

## V.

ENGLISH newspapers often speak of parties in the Principality of Bulgaria, describing the one as Conservative, the other as Liberal. In the ordinary English use of the words there are no political parties among the Bulgarians. All seek alike to complete the emancipation of their race, and to reunite the fragments into which it has been artificially broken. The amalgamation of Eastern Roumelia with free Bulgaria, the liberation and union to them of the Bulgarian districts of Macedonia, are the objects every Bulgarian has at heart.

It is true that in the first or constituent Assembly of the Principality, which met at Tirnova, there was the semblance of a division into parties. The Russians had propounded as popular a constitution as any theorist could have devised, but it contained a few clauses which tempered its absolutely democratic character. By one a limited number of members were to have seats in the future Assembly, not by election, but either by the Prince's nomination or *virtute officii*. By others a limit was imposed on the right to hold meetings for the discussion of public ques-

tions. And some control was reserved over the periodical press, and a censorship over publications generally. These clauses were supported by the Bulgarian prelates, and by some of the best educated and enlightened members of the Assembly, but opposed by many of the young men fresh from school and college, who have yet to learn that liberty is a plant which does not flourish from a too rapid growth, that a purely democratic elected body is not always a valid check on the exercise of despotic authority, and that no control over the actions of their Prince would have been so efficacious as that of men who owed their influence with their countrymen to other than political reasons, and held their seats in the Assembly independent of the popular feeling on the questions of the day. The so-called party of progress proved to be the strongest; but they were wise enough to show moderation in the exercise of their power; and a compromise was come to which afforded tolerable satisfaction to all parties. The ministry formed on the advent of the Prince in July, 1878, was composed from among the men who supported the constitution in its original form, and are called Conservatives; while the name of Liberal is applied to those whose amendments were then carried, and who constituted the Opposition. But the antagonism between the two sections does not so much arise from any very diverse views on political questions, as from the desire of individuals or groups of individuals



to secure the offices and appointments held by others.

Such difference of opinion as exists in the Principality, without having as yet divided men into definite parties, dates from an earlier period than from the first Assembly at Tirnova. It has been already stated that the first national movement was of an ecclesiastical character, having for its object the promotion of education, the substitution of a Bulgarian for a Greek hierarchy, and the use of the Bulgarian instead of the Greek language in the Liturgy. Not only did its promoters oppose attempts to throw off the Turkish rule—attempts which they regarded as hopeless—but many of them were reluctant to carry to extreme lengths their opposition to the supremacy of the Greek Patriarchate, and shrank from the schism which the rashness of the Phanariot Greeks ultimately forced upon them. These same men now, while partaking in all the hopes and aspirations of their fellow-countrymen for the complete liberation and reunion of their race, think that the present moment is inopportune for pressing the question, and that, by a comparatively exclusive attention to the intellectual development and material improvement of that portion of their country which is free, they will be hereafter in a better position to obtain what they all so much desire. The younger men, on the other hand, the students fresh from the universities, those who formed the committees

and revolutionary societies, exulting in the unexpected success that has followed their efforts, seek to press forward the national movement under auspices so much more favourable than those which attended the commencement of the agitation. In a word, the one party seek primarily the increase of the internal resources of the Principality; the other the political completion of the country. The older men also feel that they, the original leaders of the people, who have borne the brunt of the earlier struggles—for the most part the wealthier citizens of the towns—have been set aside in favour of those whom they regard as political adventurers.

If the term Conservative or Liberal could be used in the politics of the Principality, it might be applied to these two sections; but at present they remain sections of opinion only, both the present ministry and its opponents being mainly composed of the younger and more adventurous class. The accounts which from time to time appear in the newspapers, though seldom based on very accurate information, prove how unimportant are the questions that divide the men at present engaged in the struggle for power in the country. Those which come from Vienna, sympathising with the ministry as at first constituted, attribute the activity of the Opposition to Russian intrigues; while the Russian accounts denounce the Opposition as being the instruments of English policy desirous of embarrassing the newly

created State. In reality no foreign Power exercises any influence in the matter. Whatever may be the personal interests of the members of either section, they are, above everything, Bulgarian patriots. The differences between the Government and Opposition are more nominal than real, and their mutual jealousies would at once disappear if their existing liberties were menaced, or if a fair prospect was before them of completing the liberation of their race.

The Prince on his arrival was received with enthusiasm ; and those who were most bitter in their denunciations of the Ministry were careful to express their loyalty and unreserved confidence in him. He devotes himself to business, and appears disposed to take an active part in the conduct of affairs. It is well that he should do so. But his position is somewhat critical, and he has failed to keep up the enthusiasm with which on his arrival he was received. Through no fault of his own, but rather through the fault of his advisers, he has placed himself in a position which is always one of special danger to a constitutional sovereign : he has allowed himself to become identified with a party, and, what is still more unfortunate for him, a party which is only a small minority of the nation, comprising office holders, and a few men who judge that the only salvation for the country is to be found in supporting his government, whatever course it may pursue.

.. Soon after his arrival he attempted to induce

the Opposition to join with the existing Ministry and form a coalition administration, that should include both parties. Having failed through the refusal of their leaders, he had to wait the result of the first general elections, held in November 1879. A Chamber was then returned, the large majority of which was opposed to the Ministry. On this he called on M. Caravelloff, the leader of the Opposition to form an administration, but stipulated that he should include in it the Minister of War the Russian General Parenzoff, M. Gregoff the Minister of Justice, and M. Natchevitch the Minister of Finance. As M. Caravelloff declined to comply with these conditions in respect to the two last-named ministers, and the Prince insisted on them, the Assembly was dissolved; but the new one just elected is, like the first, supposed to contain a large so-called Liberal majority. The Liberal, or Opposition, party profess a determination to adhere strictly to the letter of the constitution, and are disposed to resent any attempt to infringe it. The Ministers have rather complicated the Prince's position by not concealing a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the constitution, declaring it to be too liberal and too far advanced for the people in their present condition. These statements, of course, arouse jealousy and cause undue importance to be attached to matters that would be otherwise but little regarded. The Prince and his Ministers claim that he is entitled to be addressed as

‘Visochestvo,’ which is not a Bulgarian word but the Russian equivalent for the German ‘Hoheit,’ or Highness, a title by which European Courts have already addressed him. The Opposition insist on his assuming the title of ‘Svetlost,’ which in Bulgarian signifies ‘splendour,’ given him by the constitution—a title in harmony with Bulgarian and South Slavonic ideas, by which esteem and distinction is always associated with ‘shining’ or ‘illustrious.’ They declare that no disrespect is intended thereby, and that the title they wish him to take is one by which they would address the Czar of Russia himself. It is also said the Prince is anxious to have the power of conferring decorations, and the Opposition profess to fear that by these titles and decorations the liberties of the people may be endangered. All these matters are very trivial; and it is impossible to avoid thinking that there has been some imprudence in raising an issue on such questions at such a time.

The Prince is new to the task of government, and at present of course has little acquaintance with his people, while there are few among them possessed of any wide administrative knowledge. The chief danger arises from the fact that among the foreign Representatives at his court there are few who, really comprehending the situation, are desirous that he should succeed as a popular ruler in consolidating the Bulgarian people under a constitutional government. Some whom he

may consult will counsel him to resent the election of a Chamber with an Opposition majority as a personal grievance, and recommend his attempting to set aside the constitution and govern the country by military force. The only result of such a step would be the intervention of Austria, and the military occupation of the Principality by that Power, whereby the development of the Bulgarian people might be thrown back for twenty years or more. It will be much to be lamented if the experiment of a free government is allowed to fail simply because the example of the prosperity of the Bulgarians under a constitutional system may prove troublesome to their neighbours. Anxiety is probably felt in some quarters lest Nihilism should find a convenient base of operations in free Bulgaria. There are few persons possessed of any influence there who have sympathy with Nihilism; but it is impossible to foretell what may be the consequence of the discontent that would be caused by the violent suppression of the newly acquired liberties of the people.

It has been stated that the nomination of the presidents of the municipal councils has been withdrawn from the inhabitants of the towns, and vested in the central Government. This is a repetition of the impolitic system which has inflicted so much suffering on Greece, where the municipal institutions, with the working of which the people were conversant, were subordinated

to a central Assembly—a form of government of which at its outset they had no experience. If the question before the electors is who is to govern the village as mayor, each man votes for the candidate he considers best qualified for the office; but in the case of an election to parliament, or to a central assembly, a statement of political views has more influence than personal qualifications, and, not unfrequently, the more violent and injudicious is the statement, the better it pleases the constituency whose passions it excites.

Although the questions which divide Bulgarian parties are not in themselves very important, the formation of the parties is not unaccompanied by certain advantages. By drawing the attention of the people to public questions, it increases their political knowledge, and will give reality to the debates in the Assembly and to discussions elsewhere. The danger is that politics may degenerate into a mere struggle for office; that the attention of the nation may be diverted from the development of its internal resources, and devoted to abstract political questions. The younger men, still under the influence of the theories they have heard propounded at the universities, believe that by carrying out a thoroughly liberal programme they will win the goodwill of the great European Powers. They do not consider how many of the rulers of those States are bent on neutralising or suppressing

the small measure of liberty which the people of their own or other countries have been able, in the last generation, to secure ; nor do they understand how greatly, since the opening of the Eastern question, the affairs of Turkey, and the interests of the subject races in the East, have been subordinated to the diplomatic and political rivalry of the great Powers, and made to serve the party-interests of the ministers by whom those Powers are governed. It is not to be expected that the Bulgarians will be able to avoid the difficulties which invariably attend representative institutions. But great reliance may be placed on the moderation and common sense of the people ; and there is every reason to anticipate that they will not prove inferior to other nations in the not too easy task of carrying on a parliamentary government. There is perhaps another danger which may arise from a too precocious political development—that the talent of the rising generation may be drawn from industrial pursuits to make politics a profession, and that, as has been the case in Italy, the number of offices may be multiplied to satisfy the crowd of claimants. Though wealth abounds in the Principality, it requires development ; there is little capital ; the country has been devastated by war. It is saddled, by the Treaty of Berlin, with heavy obligations in the shape of its tribute to the Porte, its share in the Turkish debt, and the completion of its railway system. The cost of



the Government is already heavy; the official salaries are about double those paid in Servia; the taxation, also, is more burthensome. The Bulgarians, a thrifty and economical people, are not likely to acquiesce without resistance in an increase of the number of appointments, or in the additional taxation it would involve. Of their desire for an economical administration, no better proof can be given than the fact that the Constituent Assembly reduced the Prince's civil list from 30,000*l.*, as proposed by the Russian governor, to 16,000*l.* a year.

Attempts have been made to charge the Bulgarians with religious intolerance, and with the persecution of those who secede from the National Church. Whether there were any cases of attempted persecution under Turkish rule it is difficult to say; I know of none that are authenticated. Certainly there have been none since the war. One of the acts of the first Assembly of the Principality was to amplify the very liberal provisions of the draft Constitution on this subject, and to secure perfect toleration, and freedom to make converts, for all religious denominations. The American missionaries, who dreaded the Russian occupation from fear of the annoyances to which they might be subjected, testify that under both the Russian and Bulgarian administrations they have enjoyed perfect freedom in respect to themselves, their schools, and their converts; and in several towns, both in the

Principality and in Eastern Roumelia, we found Bulgarians who had been trained by the Americans, and sent out by them to do missionary work, living in perfect security, and on most friendly and intimate terms with the political leaders of the places where they resided.

On what footing the Prince and the Assembly who now constitute the Government of the Principality may place the army, it is difficult to anticipate. In June 1879 it consisted of twenty-one battalions of militia, each 600 strong, with reserves capable of increasing them to 2,000, a body of gendarmerie, and, I believe, a small force of artillery. There was a military school at Sofia, for the training of officers. In the newspapers it is stated that application has been made to Russia for officers to take the higher commands, till Bulgarians have been trained and qualified for the purpose.

The questions relating to the resident Turkish population and the repatriation of the refugees are among the most difficult with which the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia have to deal; but the conditions under which the two Governments are placed in these as in many other respects are so different that it will be well to consider the case of each Government separately.

The Principality has to recognise the nominal sovereignty of the Sultan, and to submit to the payment of a tribute, but is otherwise in every

way independent of him. Except for a small portion of its south-western frontier, which borders on Macedonia, it is conterminous with none but Christian States—reckoning Eastern Roumelia, the bulk of whose population is Bulgarian Christian, as included under that designation. It has, therefore, nothing to fear either from the interference of the Porte, or from any serious inroads on the part of neighbouring Turks.

Various estimates have been made of the numbers of its Turkish population, some going so far as to assert that it includes half the population of the Principality. This, however, is clearly an exaggeration, and the generally received opinion, that there are from 200,000 to 250,000 Mussulmans, is probably not far from the truth. Strictly speaking, a portion of them are Pomaks, or Bulgarian Mussulmans, and the others Turks, supposed to be descendants of the original conquerors, though it is often contended that they also are the descendants of indigenous converts to Islam. In speaking of them, the term 'Turk' is used as synonymous with 'Mussulman'; and in that sense I employ it in these pages. Most of these Turks inhabit the eastern part of the Principality, around Osman Bazar, Schumla, and Varna, a great part of which district was not directly invaded by the Russians, but was only occupied by their troops after the cession of Varna and Schumla late in 1878. These men consider that they have never been conquered; they have

not felt the presence of the Russian army; and their religious pride makes them support with impatience a Christian rule, especially that of their former subjects. They are said to have declared that they will neither submit to Bulgarian officials, nor permit the presence of Bulgarian police in their villages. Turkish officers and soldiers, all armed, belonging to other districts, are reported to have been sent from Constantinople under the pretext of being disbanded troops returned to their homes, and have been distributed among the villages, their numbers being variously estimated, by some at as many as 30,000 men. The Government of the Principality cannot permit this state of things to continue, or allow its laws to be set at defiance by an armed population within its territory avowedly hostile to its rule. It has been difficult from the newspaper accounts to make out what was going on in the matter. At one time martial law was said to have been declared; afterwards it was reported that the administration of the district was restored to its normal state; later still we heard that the conscription, to which all the subjects of the Principality are liable, was about to be introduced there as a means of testing the power of the Government and enforcing its authority. It will require all the tact and judgment both of the Government itself and of its officials to deal with this difficult subject. The Bulgarians themselves bear no ill-will to the Turks. Conscious of their

own superiority in education and intellect, of which the inferiority of the Turkish deputies alongside the Bulgarian at the first Assembly at Tirnova was a striking example, they would, provided the Turks are willing to submit to the same laws as other citizens, welcome the addition their industry would make to the nation's wealth in the cultivation of its sparsely inhabited territory. But they cannot permit so large a population to remain armed, avowedly hostile to their rule, and setting their laws at defiance. The last accounts state that all is quiet in the Turkish districts of the Principality, and that order is maintained there without recourse to any special measures, except that exemption from military service for a few years has been conceded to them. This is unquestionably due to the moderation, toleration, and good sense of the Bulgarians on the one hand, and on the other to the quiet and peaceable disposition of the Turkish peasantry when the exciting influences of agents from Constantinople, and of their own local leaders, have been removed from among them.

The repatriation of the refugees causes far less embarrassment to the Government of the Principality than it does to that of Eastern Roumelia, and the subject may best be discussed in connection with its effect on the latter. Here it is sufficient to remark that few of the poorer class of Turks, who have little if any property to dispose of, desire to return to the Principality.

Without an object, Mussulmans seldom willingly subject themselves to Christian rule; while the complete independence of the Principality renders futile the motive that might otherwise have induced a party in Constantinople to urge them to that course for the sake of the disturbance their presence might create. Those who return will generally betake themselves to the districts where the Turkish villages are most numerous, among which they will find a temporary refuge and asylum, till they have been able to provide themselves with habitations, and permanent means of support. The Turkish possessors of property, the former local tyrants, accept their fate, knowing that their power has passed away. They have but one desire—to dispose of all they possess, and take up their abode where the laws and customs of Islam are still paramount. Many of their rights, acquired by injustice and oppression, are disputed. Where capital is so scarce, the saleable value of property is low; still their desire to sever all connection with the Principality, where the inferiority of their present condition is rendered more galling by the recollection of their former absolute supremacy, will induce them to agree to compromises for the disposal of properties which have lost half their value, and in the possession of which there has ceased to be any enjoyment.

## VI.

THE disposition of the Christian population in Eastern Roumelia with regard to the Turks is much affected by the political situation of the Province, one very different from that of the Principality of Bulgaria. In one point only, if in that, the Province has an advantage over its northern neighbour; viz., in the fact that, whereas there the Mussulman population amounts to one-seventh of the whole, in Eastern Roumelia all the inhabitants are Bulgarians, except about 60,000 Mussulmans, 35,000 (at most) Greeks, and from 5,000 to 10,000 Jews, Armenians, Gipsies, &c.; though how far these proportions have been altered by the returning Turkish refugees, whose numbers have been by some estimated as high as 40,000, it is difficult to form an opinion. In every other respect the comparative disadvantages of the Province are manifest. It is bordered on its southern and the greater portion of its western frontier by Turkish provinces, while the mountains that shape it are inhabited by a lawless race of Turks in constant communication with their co-religionists within the Roumelian frontier, the bulk of whom are to be found on the slopes of

the mountains near the Turkish territory, and in villages round Aidos and Bourgas to the east.

Eastern Roumelia is still considered subject to the authority of the Sultan, by whom the governor, whose term of office expires at the end of five years, is appointed; and whatever may be his disposition, the powers of interference reserved to the Porte are such as to enable it to render the proper carrying on of the government a matter of impossibility.

The people were not consulted respecting their Constitution; but the laws for the political and local administration of the Province are embodied in a 'Statut organique,' in many respects a most creditable document, betokening on the part of those who framed it a desire to provide for the welfare of the people to be governed under it. It was drawn up by Commissioners named by the European Powers for the purpose. It appears to involve a system too complicated to be worked satisfactorily by a people so inexperienced in administration, and more expensive than the finances of the Province can bear. That the constitution established by it is less popular than that of the Principality may not be without some advantages, by securing to the Province the services of men who, on account of their caution and moderation, might in a time of excitement like the present find themselves unable to compete with more adventurous politicians for the votes of their fellow-countrymen; while the limit im-



posed on the power of the Assembly may compel the people to concentrate their attention on their local and material interests, and by a gradual experience in self-government become more capable of exercising that complete independence which they must before long acquire.

The Commissioners were hampered at the outset by having imposed on them two obligations, both incapable of fulfilment; and the consequent difficulties are likely to embarrass the Government of the Province till some further change is made in its Constitution. One of these obligations was to secure for the different nationalities who compose the population perfect equality, and a share in the Government proportionate to their numbers: the other was to accord administrative autonomy to the Province and at the same time to secure the direct military and political authority of the Sultan.

The impossibility of establishing equality among the different nationalities does not arise from the requirement of equal rights, equal laws, and equality before the tribunals, for all. To equality in these respects no opposition would be raised on the part of the Bulgarians, and it can be secured without any difficulty. But the attempt to base an administration on the assumption that Turk and Bulgarian will work together for a common national object, for their mutual advantage, is a very different matter. The proportionate numbers of the various races inhabit-

ing Eastern Roumelia have been already given ; only three among them are numerous enough to be able to pretend to any share in the administration under the condition in question—the Bulgarian Christians, the Mussulmans, whether of Turkish or Bulgarian origin, and the Greeks. Although the Greek question at this moment causes considerable embarrassment to the Government of the Province, this is mainly due to the fact of its having been made use of, if not by the Turkish Government, by European diplomatic agents determined if possible to prevent the success of the autonomous State, and by the Phanariot Greeks of Constantinople, jealous of the acquisition of liberty by an Eastern Christian race not subordinated to their control. The mass of the Greek population, if left to themselves, would in political matters have amalgamated with the Bulgarians. In all probability they will eventually do so, and acquire their full share in the government of the province. Their numbers also are small compared with the two other populations. The difficulty is to secure any common action between Turks and Bulgarians ; and the impediments in the way of their joining in a common administration are very great.

In ordinary times the Turkish peasantry are industrious, quiet, and submissive to authority. But they cannot forget that they form part of a once dominant race ; and they are always open to the influence of emissaries from Constantinople,

as well as of their own local leaders. The amount of authority still reserved to the Sultan encourages these leaders in the hope that they may be able so to embarrass the provincial government as to recover the supremacy they possessed before the war. Their followers resent a defeat which they attribute, not to the strength and discipline of the Russian armies, but to the treachery of their pashas, all of whom, a Turk once told me, were, with the exception of Osman Pasha, bribed to betray them. They resent the equality, and still more the supremacy of their former subjects. We found it a current belief amongst them that on the departure of the Russians the Sultan's rule would be re-established, and then the opportunity for revenge would present itself. A Turkish driver showed a friend of mine a knife, saying he would never rest till with it he had killed ten Bulgarians. In one of the mosques of Tatar Bazardjik, when we were there, some sixty Turks were heard discussing together how, on the departure of the Russians, they would once and for all exterminate the Bulgarians, and so for the future prevent any trouble on their part; and similar language was held in the bazaar of Philippopolis. The animosity of the former governing class, the Turkish officials and landed proprietors, is still deeper. In the independence of their late subjects they have lost consideration and power; above all, they have lost that large portion of their revenue derived

from the oppression they can no longer exercise, the exactions they can no longer enforce. The idea of co-operating in the civil administration and serving under a common standard in the national militia with their former subjects is most offensive to their religious sentiments, and bitterly humiliating to their pride as a once ruling class.

In the 'Statut organique' the Commissioners seem to have appreciated the difficulty arising from these hostilities of race and religion; and they have sought to meet them by securing due influence to the minority both in the central chamber and in the local administration. But so inveterate are the hostilities of race and religion that there is little prospect of the Turkish minority using the powers conferred upon it for other purposes than to embarrass the central government, which, on account of the preponderance of numbers, must always be Bulgarian.

The second obligation imposed on the Commissioners—to secure administrative autonomy to the province, and at the same time preserve the military and political authority of the Sultan—is, if possible, still more incapable of realisation. The relations of the British Colonies with the home Government, and the position of Hungary in the dual government of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, have been mentioned as examples to show how the rights of the Sovereign can co-exist with the independence of the Province. But, in respect

to our Colonies, there is no important distinction or animosity of race or religion, and the sovereign rights have been practically conceded already. England exercises scarcely any political control over her more important Colonies; nor does her military authority amount to more than that she undertakes the duty of protection in the event of a war. Hungary enjoys her full share in the military and political direction of the united Austro-Hungarian Empire. In both cases the concessions have been made voluntarily, and not extorted as the price of a peace which terminated a disastrous war.

The Sultan is the chief of a great religion and the leader of a conquering race. The very motive of his existence depends on the maintenance of the prerogatives of that race and the supremacy of that religion. He must govern by means of the Turk, for the Turk, in accordance with the laws of Islam. If political authority will not enable him to do that, political authority is worthless to him, and, so far as he is concerned, no authority at all. To place a province forming part of the Turkish Empire under Christian administration, to equalise the Christians with the Turks and practically invest the former with the government on account of their numerical superiority, is not only to offend the national pride of the Turk, and contravene the precepts of his religion, but also to prohibit the Sultan's employment of the only means whereby his authority

can be exercised. In fact, his authority and the rights of the Bulgarian people of Eastern Roumelia, as defined by the 'Statut organique,' cannot exist together.

The difficulties that arise from the impossibility of reconciling the authority of the Sultan with the liberties of the Province, in accordance with the decision of the Berlin Treaty, the details of which were carried out by the Eastern Roumelian Commissioners, are enormously increased by the position, the interests, and the passions of the inhabitants of the Province. There is but little value to the Sultan in authority over an autonomous province which will use that autonomy for little other purpose than to free itself from his authority, or in command over a militia the chief object of whose enrolment is to protect its countrymen against his troops. History teaches us that when communities have acquired partial freedom from Turkish rule, they continue their efforts till they have thrown it off altogether; and the measure of independence conceded to the Bulgarians in Eastern Roumelia will render them more impatient of the authority reserved to the Sultan, and more determined to secure themselves, by its complete rejection, from the danger of any attempt at its extension.

This danger arises mainly from the right reserved by the Berlin Congress to the Porte to introduce Turkish troops into the Province. These troops can be introduced for two distinct

purposes—to garrison the frontier, or to suppress disturbances at the request of the governor. The right of the Turks to garrison the frontier is a standing menace to the freedom of the Province. From a military point of view, it is absolutely valueless. The Porte would have to build forts and barracks, to equip and fortify them, and, since it is debarred from levying requisitions on the surrounding country, to provision them at a cost its ruined finances are ill able to sustain; while troops employed to man them would be better employed elsewhere, and would be liable to be cut off from the main body of their army by a rising of the Bulgarians in their rear. The province of Eastern Roumelia is open to the Turks along the whole of its southern frontier; and an army from Constantinople could reach the Balkans, even if that range formed a tenable line of defence, before an enemy crossed the Danube or before the Principality of Bulgaria could mobilise and concentrate its little army.

The advantage to the Porte that would result from the presence of these garrisons would be the re-establishment of the government of the Sultan, of the Turkish rule, and the destruction of the autonomy of the Province. Of this the Bulgarians are well aware. In June 1879 they were all armed and enrolled in what they call Gymnastic Societies, and determined to resist to the last the presence of these garrisons. The moderate men and the party of action, the com-

paratively wealthy inhabitants of the towns and the peasantry in the villages, with the sufferings they have so lately undergone still fresh in their memories, were all agreed on this matter. They were under no illusions as to their capacity to resist the forces of the Turkish Empire, even in its present enfeebled condition; nor were they ignorant of the fate which their resistance would draw down on themselves and all they hold most dear. Their chief hope lay in this—that Europe would for very shame be compelled to interfere to put an end to the acts of horror that would be re-enacted on their soil. Nor, desperate as it appears, was their determination other than a wise one. If the garrisons had entered, nothing could have saved the Province from anarchy, and the people preferred to fight before and not after an iron chain had been drawn round them.

It is not difficult to understand their position. Even if the moderate party—and in Eastern Roumelia there are men who are both wise and moderate—had been able to induce the mass of the population to acquiesce in the passage of the Turkish troops through the country, and in their presence on the frontier, their entry would have been resisted by the more ardent spirits; while the Turks in the Province and on the frontier, looking on it as evidence of the restoration of the Sultan's authority, cheered by seeing his army again among them, and relying on it for support, would have profited by the disturbances



that must inevitably have arisen to attack the Bulgarians generally, whether or not they had participated in the outbreak. The Bulgarians defending their homes, a civil war would have ensued far beyond the power of the provincial militia to suppress. The Turkish troops are the only ones that could have been called in to establish order; and the world already knows but too well what is meant by the establishment of order among a subject Christian population by Turkish troops, especially when they are joined, as they would have been, by the Turkish population. Even if the whole Christian population had remained quiet, the mere presence of the Turkish troops, arousing the hopes and inflaming the passions of the Mussulmans, would have encouraged them to outrages which, by provoking resistance and retaliation on the part of the Christians, would have led to anarchy, and have been the prelude to a general massacre.

It is to be borne in mind that the presence of a Mussulman population intensifies the miseries which Turkish rule inflicts on its Christian subjects. The tyranny of a governor may be moderated by a bribe; by the venality of a judge some one profits; from the fiscal rapacity of the Government many hope to escape; but, in addition to all these evils, the Christians who live amongst Turks have to submit to individual tyranny on the part of a privileged race whose only claim to superiority consists in their being

the one to which the rulers belong. On the other hand, the lower class of Turks, if their passions were not inflamed by their local leaders, and encouraged by the authorities at Constantinople, would prove a quiet and industrious peasantry, with whom the Bulgarians, owing to their superior intelligence, éducation, and industry, would have no difficulty in holding their own, if political equality was once really established.

The Bulgarians of the Province fear on the part of the Turkish population some act, whether it be premeditated or not, that may cause the entry of the Turkish troops and the establishment of the Turkish Government. That Government, they know well, would let loose the fanatical fury of the Turkish population, against whom, when backed by the troops, all resistance must be unavailing ; while from recent experience they are aware of the fate that would ultimately befall themselves.

At this moment Macedonia offers an example of the condition of a province under Turkish rule. Anarchy prevails throughout it. The Government is powerless, or, if it possesses power, refuses to exert it. There is neither justice, nor order, nor security for person or property anywhere. The line of the railway is hardly safe within a few hundred yards of the stations. Outside the walls of the towns life is in danger. Merchants dare not travel from one town to another, except under the protection of a strong escort ; and some have

been carried off by brigands, either in defiance of or with the connivance of the escorts. Murders are of daily occurrence, perpetrated by Turkish and Albanian beys and their adherents, who outrage the women in the villages, which they afterwards plunder, or force to ransom themselves in order to escape from pillage; while from the Turkish authorities neither protection nor redress can be obtained. And all this takes place in full view of the people of Eastern Roumelia.

Though the Bulgarians of the Province with good reason hate the Turkish rule, and fear its re-establishment, they have no hostility to the Turkish population as such. They are willing to live on good terms with its members, except with those who were the agents of an iniquitous Government, or those at whose hands they have suffered wrongs, or the beys and landed proprietors, the former petty local tyrants, the leaders in the former massacres, whose influence over their co-religionists might, they fear, be employed to excite them to the commission of fresh horrors.

Many attempts have been made to charge them with cruelty to the Turks since the war. No doubt, in Eastern Roumelia, as in the Principality of Bulgaria, there have been cases of retaliation, in some rare instances on Turkish villages, oftener on individuals, the men of local influence, from whose oppression the people had especially suffered: and here also the Turkish houses abandoned by their owners have, when ton

occupied by the Bulgarians, been destroyed. This is not to be wondered at; it is not in human nature that men should not seek to avenge such wrongs as the Bulgarians have suffered; but cases of the kind have been, and are, rare. Nothing has occurred to justify the charge of any general and deliberate ill-treatment. Such a charge, in order to be well founded, must be based on some more sure authority than the statements of the Turkish Government, or the reports of those Europeans, as untrustworthy even as the Turks, who pass their time in trying to rake up evidence that may damage the newly-established Government of the Province.

I expected to find the people seeking to avenge their wrongs, and to impose on the Turks the burthen of the subjection they had themselves so long endured. I was astonished to hear how few instances there were of anything of the kind; and among the persons I came across were some who would have made the most of any such proceedings. The Turks could travel in perfect safety throughout the country, and could frequent the streets and bazaars of the towns, wearing the fez, the badge of their race and religion, without fear of molestation. The careful inquiries I made, and also those made by others, confirm the conviction that neither in the towns nor villages were the Turks who remained generally molested during the war, or maltreated afterwards. On the contrary, at the time of my visit

the Turks had been, and were being, relieved and fed by the Bulgarians in some of the districts where the massacres had occurred; and bitter as were the sentiments expressed against the Turkish Government, the language, except in the places that had been the scenes of the worst atrocities, was not only not hostile, but even friendly towards the Turkish population.

The Bulgarians of Eastern Roumelia have been reproached with the obstacles encountered by the Turkish refugees who sought to return to their homes and recover their property. This question is a far more serious one in the Province than in the Principality of Bulgaria. The difficulties with which it is beset are deserving of consideration.

Within the last twenty years, by the operation of intentionally partial laws, and by exactions contrary even to those laws, much land has passed from the hands of the Bulgarians into those of the Turks. In virtue of recent legal changes on the subject of title deeds, land belonging to Bulgarians was seized by Turks; the properties of villages and communes were taken possession of by the Government, and sold or granted to rich Turks; and in many cases the Bulgarian was compelled to cede his land to a Turkish neighbour from fear of personal violence, or from the knowledge that he had no prospect of justice before a tribunal whose decisions were invariably given in favour of the dominant race, and be-

fore which Christian evidence against a Musulman was not even heard. The Turk having fled, the Bulgarian has taken possession of the property. The Turk, on his return, claims it as his own, and produces his title deeds; the Bulgarian produces older ones; and the difficulty is how to examine into the proceedings of a tribunal no longer in existence, and ascertain to what extent its decision was based on any law, or was the result of favouritism and injustice. If the Turk pleads his right on the ground of possession, the Bulgarian answers that it is in *his* possession now, that he occupies and cultivates it. In a country where the control over a stream of water makes all the difference in the value of the adjoining land, the rights of a Turk were often based on no better ground than that no Christian dared appeal against him before the tribunals; and the Turk complains of the Christian having diverted water from his mill or rice ground, when it has only been restored to the natural channel from which an arbitrary exercise of power enabled the Turk in the first instance to turn it. Immediately before and after the entry of the Russians, the Turks were urged by their mollahs, and by emissaries from Constantinople, to quit the country. Many sold their properties for a nominal sum, the tenth or twentieth of their value. On their return, they now claim them back, on account of the small consideration given; but the Bulgarians naturally plead that the sale

was voluntary, and that the Turk in his eagerness to depart at the time agreed to the bargain. Much of the former property of the Turks was sold by the provisional Government, and bought by the Bulgarians, not, it is true, at very high prices; but their title to it rests on a foundation at least as sound and equitable as that on which much Turkish property is held; and they may demand that, if possession be taken as a base of legal right, possession at the moment prior to the Turkish exodus shall not be the only valid one. Where land, having been abandoned, has been taken possession of by a Bulgarian by whom the title of the Turkish owner is not disputed, the question arises what proportion of the produce and the growing crops shall belong to each.

But the simplest of all the cases are the most difficult to deal with; namely, those where the Bulgarians whose houses have been destroyed by the Turks have taken possession of those the Turks have abandoned. The returning refugee demands back his own house; the Bulgarian contends that he has been rendered houseless by the act of that Turk, or of his fellows, and refuses to quit unless another home be provided for him. The Province is too poor to undertake the rebuilding of these houses; and to attempt it would be to impose on the Bulgarians, from whom the bulk of the taxes are raised, the penalty of paying for the injury they have suffered at Turkish hands.

In a village south of the Balkans I met with a case of this kind. We put up for the night in a Turkish house then occupied by a Bulgarian farmer. The former Turkish proprietor, the chief man of the place, had seized twenty-two young Bulgarians belonging to it, of whom he killed seventeen and allowed five to escape. After destroying the houses of the Christians, he fled with his family. The Bulgarian who had established himself in the empty house after the destruction of his own had lost all his cattle and two-thirds of his sheep and goats, which had been carried off by the Turks.

The inhabitants of towns like Carlovo and Eski Zagra can hardly be expected to welcome very cordially the return of those at whose hands they suffered so fearfully only two years ago. The Turkish proprietors also whose rights of property cause most contention were the instigators of the massacres and personally guilty of the worst atrocities.

The ordinary Turkish peasantry who have lately returned lost all the property of which they plundered the Bulgarians, as well as all their own, during and after their flight. They have neither sheep nor goats by which to support their families, nor oxen and implements of husbandry wherewith to cultivate the land, nor seed corn, nor means to provide for their present or future support; and there is no large Mussulman population, as in the Principality of Bulgaria, among



whom they could distribute themselves. The Bulgarians in their poverty naturally object to provide for those by whose acts that poverty was caused; they point also to the condition of Macedonia, and not unreasonably demand that, if the Turk be re-established in his possessions among themselves, protection for life, person, and property shall be secured to their fellow-countrymen in that province.

These difficulties are very serious; and in some cases it appears hopeless to do justice between the conflicting rights of the parties. Much might be accomplished by a really impartial Commission; and much may be expected from the extraordinary moderation of the leading men among the Bulgarians. The Turkish proprietors, if they were convinced that all chance of recovering their oppressive powers was lost, would willingly, like their brethren in the Principality, dispose of their property to escape from Christian government; while the Turkish peasantry, if established on the waste lands to the south of Adrianople, would, with some help from the Porte, be at least in as prosperous a condition as if restored to their ruined houses and uncultivated farms. But, on the part of the Turkish Government and those who advocate its cause in the Province, no honest attempt has been made to deal with the difficulties of the case. On the contrary, they have been made use of to maintain the feeling of excitement, irritation, and

anxiety, now prevailing, a state of feeling which in its turn enhances them. The refugees were sent back by railway and by sea, without notice to the provincial authorities, in large numbers at a time, with little provision for their immediate wants, with none for their future support. They were sent back armed; and after it was found that the police deprived the men of weapons, the women concealed them under their *feridgis*. Riots have been the consequence; and others were feared which might at any moment throw the Province into anarchy. A Turkish army was massed on the southern frontier; the Porte was believed to be seeking a pretext to march it in; the Phanariot Greeks were incessantly urging this step, which was threatened also by certain European diplomatic agents at Philippopolis. The constant fear of a Turkish invasion, engendered by these proceedings, precluded the establishment of satisfactory relations between the Bulgarians and the Turkish inhabitants or the returning refugees, and weakened the power of the moderate party to control the more ardent section of their countrymen. There can be no confidence in a government incessantly interfered with; and the governor can have little authority who is continually threatened by the Porte with removal. The Bulgarians in Eastern Roumelia desire complete independence and reunion with the Northern Principality. They feel their case to be a peculiarly hard one; for they suffered most both in

1876 and in 1877; the massacres in the Province were the immediate cause of the war; and they are both wealthier and better educated than their northern countrymen.

Since my visit affairs have taken a turn far more favourable than there was at that time reason to anticipate. The Porte seems to have dropped its open hostility to the administration, and to have acquiesced in the partial independence secured to the Province. All idea of a re-entry of Turkish troops for the purpose of garrisoning the Balkan passes or under any other pretext is apparently given up, nor do we hear any more of the Turkish army said to have been massed on the southern frontier. The Chamber has met, and the Bulgarians who compose the great majority of its members have given proof of much practical good sense. They have devoted their energies to the material improvement of the Province, and to the reduction of all needless expenditure. Now that the fear of a Turkish invasion is removed, the militia force has been materially diminished, and the gymnastic societies have been either dissolved, or transformed so as to serve as a reserve for the gendarmerie. Prince Vogorides, the Governor, has displayed considerable ability in his very difficult position, and while identifying himself with the interests of his people, has known how to avoid giving offence to the Porte or to other Powers.

In all probability the English Consul-General has contributed in no small degree to the success of this, the most recent, and, for the present, most prosperous attempt at self-government on the part of a province lately subject to Turkish rule. By his unceasing hostility he has brought home to the Bulgarians the consciousness of there being among them an ever-present enemy ready to turn to account any mistake they may commit, and impressed on them the necessity of sinking all minor differences in order to unite for the preservation of their newly-acquired liberties, and in support of the governor and of the constitution, on the maintenance of which they at present depend.

The Bulgarians of the Province are behaving with judgment and moderation. General Strecher, although a pasha in the Turkish service, finds no difficulty in commanding the militia since he has given evidence of possessing the qualifications necessary for that office. Mr. Schmidt, whose life was supposed to be hardly safe when, as agent of the Ottoman Bank, he acted under the orders of the Eastern Roumelian Commission, and, as the people thought, in the interests of the Porte, finds no impediments thrown in the way of the performance of his duties now that he is Finance Minister of the Province, and a member of the Council of Administration. A proposal that the first Directors, as the Ministers are called, should be European experts, was made to the European

Commission, with the assent, if not at the suggestion, of the Exarch and many of the leading Bulgarians, who were conscious of their own inexperience in administration. It was vetoed at the instance of one of the Commissioners, who probably feared that compliance with the suggestion might establish the new Government on too solid a basis. However little it may be in unison with their wishes, the people are willing to govern themselves in accordance with the decision of Europe, and accept the '*Statut organique*' as the charter of their present liberties. Every month of peace confirms them in those liberties, and is a step towards their future complete independence. The majority of the Administrative Council and the greater portion of the militia are, like the bulk of the population, Bulgarian; and the governor pursues a national policy, notwithstanding the menaces and intrigues brought to bear against him. But, owing to the artificial and complicated nature of the Constitution, and the little good will which some of its authors had for its success, the path is strewn with difficulties. In surmounting them the people are giving evidence of a political sagacity which might often be sought for in vain among the nations that have made the furthest advances in civilisation.

Few among the European States have displayed any friendliness towards the Bulgarians of Eastern Roumelia. The hostility of one is

avowed; that of another is scarcely disguised. The greatest danger, however, still arises from the power conceded to the Sultan, and the strong inducement under which he is placed to suppress the modicum of liberty at present assured to the people.

It is impossible to withhold some amount of sympathy from the Sultan in the position in which he is placed by the Treaty of Berlin with respect to Eastern Roumelia. It is expected that the Province will become more prosperous and its people more contented, and that it will contrast favourably with the other provinces of his empire, for this reason, and this reason only—that it is removed from under his immediate control, and no longer subject to the laws and administration by which it was formerly ruled, and by means of which he now governs the remaining portion of his dominions. Power is reserved to him, if not to crush the new constitution of the Province, at any rate to neutralise all the advantages that can accrue from it; and he is expected to use that power in such a manner as to prove to the world that in the diminution of his rule is to be found the best method for securing the prosperity of his subjects. By the stipulation for reforms under foreign Commissioners in the European provinces of Turkey, by the rights given to England under the Anglo-Turkish Convention (rights emphasised, though not enforced, by the threatened presence of the British fleet), and by

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the pressure of the English and other embassies to transfer the management of the Turkish finances to European Commissioners, the Sultan is called on to divest himself of the chief prerogatives of sovereignty; and, while he is thus declared incapable of governing that portion of his dominions on the wealth and prosperity of which his revenue and power depend, this enormous influence is given him over the destinies of a province whose well-being must prove the strongest condemnation of his own system of government.

## VII.

THE Bulgarians in their struggle for freedom have nowhere met with more bitter hostility than from the Greeks under Turkish rule, especially in all matters concerning the Province of Eastern Roumelia. At the commencement of the late war there was no ill-feeling between the two populations. The Greek peasants gave as cordial a welcome to the Russian army as any others through whose villages it passed; and many of them even now desire nothing better than to share the newly-acquired liberty of the Bulgarians. The present antagonism between the two races is due almost exclusively to the action of the Phanariots. By means of the Patriarchal Council, mainly composed of themselves, and by means of their influence with the more powerful section of the Greek population at Philippopolis, they have sought to create every kind of embarrassment for the provincial Administration. The Constantinople newspapers, equally under their control, have been full of unceasing abuse of the Bulgarians. They have denounced their liberty as a menace to Greek independence, complained of the Greek element being swamped by



the Bulgarian in the Administration, whose proceedings they have misrepresented, called on the Turkish Government to occupy the Balkan passes with its troops, and declared their preference for Turkish rule to liberty shared with the Bulgarians. Their motives are perfectly intelligible. They recognise the rapid decay of the Turkish power, and the diminution of the Turkish population; they cherish the recollection of the Empire they once possessed, which, through the increasing decrepitude of the Turks, they hope to recover; and in the race for the possession of Constantinople, the prestige attached to whose name and history enhances the importance due to its situation, they dread the rivalry of the Bulgarians, whose rapid advance in education, civilisation, and political intelligence makes them formidable, and who possess the advantage of greater numbers concentrated in a better geographical situation, and the sympathy and probable support of the other Slave nations. The Greeks were the last of the Christian races in the East to lose, the first to recover for a portion of their population, complete independence. Admitted by the Turks to a subordinate share in the government, and, alone of all their subjects, habitually employed by them in affairs of state, they have been recognised by Europe generally as the representatives and leaders of the Christian subjects of the Porte, who were commonly supposed till within the last twenty years to be as

completely identified with them in race as in religion. On grounds of this kind they consider themselves the heirs of the Turkish Empire, the champions and chiefs of the other Christian races, who will, they expect, be content to accept under them, and from them, the modicum of liberty they think fit to concede, on the extinction of the rule of their common tyrants. It is with jealousy that they see political freedom, independent of their leadership, in the possession of a previously undistinguished people, whose first step to its acquisition was the throwing off of their ecclesiastical supremacy; and the sentiment rises to one of little less than positive hatred towards a community whose independence bars their recovery of an historic empire, and which is in a position to dispute with them the possession of the city, its centre and seat.

Some sympathy is due to even the most exaggerated claims advanced on behalf of the Greeks. With a literature and history unrivalled by any other nation, the traditions of which they have preserved through the darkest period of their subjection, they have in the mass remained true to the Christian faith, in despite of a continuous grinding oppression; while to their ecclesiastical organisation, notwithstanding its corruption, is due the maintenance of a national life among themselves, and in a certain sense even among the other nations over whom its influence has been extended. Of great intelligence, possessing both

mercantile and maritime enterprise, refined in their domestic life, they alone of the people in the East have been able to maintain relations with the West. Imbued with sincere and ardent patriotism, their efforts are unceasing to liberate their fellow-countrymen, and enable them to profit by the freedom they hope eventually to secure. Through the schools and other establishments they have founded, the Greek population, both in the subject provinces and in the free Kingdom, have attained to an educational standard which few, if any, of the other nations of Europe have reached.

The advantages they possessed, above all the fact that the whole ecclesiastical organisation of the Eastern Church was in their hands, might have enabled the Greeks to associate themselves with the aspirations of the other subject races for freedom, and to obtain, as the price of their assistance, such a general leadership as would have secured for them paramount authority on the extinction of the Turkish power. The deliverance of Greece was at the outset aided by insurrections in Roumania and elsewhere; and for a time it appeared as if it was not Hellenic freedom only, but the liberation of all the Christian subjects of the Porte, that it was then attempted to secure. Since that time, however, the Greeks have unfortunately sought in the traditions of classical Hellas, and not in those of the Byzantine Empire, an historical basis for their

claims, and have endeavoured to limit the freedom for which they struggle, and the sovereignty they hope to wrest from the hands of the Turks, to the Greek-speaking people only, instead of including all the Christian subjects of the Porte. By this policy they perhaps strengthened the sympathies of classical scholars in the West, and of men who were fascinated by the thought of seeing freedom restored to the descendants of those who first taught the world that it is the right of nations to be free ; but they separated their cause from that of the other races previously bound to them by the tie of a common Church and the desire to throw off a foreign tyranny. When the development of national feeling among the Bulgarians showed them the futility of all attempts to Hellenise that people, they converted the organisation of the Eastern Church into the instrument of their own and of Turkish oppression, and provoked the Bulgarian schism which was a death-blow to Greek supremacy. They now seek to deprive the Bulgarians of the liberty for which they themselves are eager, and to impose on Eastern Roumelia that Turkish rule the inherent vices of which they justly denounce when Thessaly or Epirus are in question. They serve the Porte in the vain hope of succeeding to its inheritance ; not perceiving that in resisting the liberation of others, they impede their own, that the maintenance of the Turkish power beyond the Greek provinces involves the continuance of its

misgovernment within them, and that their pleadings in favour of the Turkish Government, and in opposition to Bulgarian liberties, serve as a substantive argument to those who oppose the completion of Hellenic independence.

Their position in Eastern Roumelia is essentially a weak one. The Greek population there is small compared to the Bulgarian. Their claim to the Province is purely historical, based on its having once formed part of the Byzantine Empire, and on the fact that its chief towns were till quite lately almost exclusively under Greek influence. In no contingency can they hope to establish their own supremacy in the country; and if by the embarrassments they seek to create they could render its government impossible, the result would be the re-establishment of the direct rule of the Porte or the intervention of a great European Power, either of which alternatives would be fatal to the legitimate development of Greek liberties elsewhere.

They have provoked a bitter resentment on the part of the Bulgarians, which precludes any immediate hope of common action between the two races. This hostility must in the end prove most injurious to themselves. They have thus pursued the same selfish and short-sighted policy as that by which, more than five hundred years ago, they brought destruction on their empire.

These intrigues are the work of the Phanariot Greeks. The Greeks of the Kingdom have had

little to do with them. On their part they made the fatal mistake of not profiting by the collapse of the Turkish power, after the Russians crossed the Balkans, to secure the independence of the Greek provinces still under Turkish rule. They feared the Turkish fleet. The freedom of Thessaly and Epirus would have been worth the risk of a bombardment of the Piræus and of Athens itself; but an Englishman cannot reproach them for having believed assurances given them by England, not less positively if indirectly, that from the maintenance of neutrality they should derive advantages as great as any a Russian alliance could offer them. The cause of Greece was advocated by English Ministers no sooner and no longer than it could be employed in opposition to Slave independence. When it had served that purpose it was contemptuously tossed aside. Of the ultimate recovery of freedom by the Greek race there can be no doubt, unless the Turks are able to dispose of the Greek question as they attempted to settle the Bulgarian question, and are too successfully dealing with the Armenian question—accomplishing through systematic anarchy and pre-ordered lawlessness the more or less complete extermination of the race.

## VIII.

THE views the Bulgarians entertain in respect to foreign Powers, and the relations they desire to cultivate with them, would be easily understood if it were borne in mind that the Bulgarians are much like other people—that they look mainly to their own interests, are on their guard against all by whom they believe those interests to be menaced, and seek the friendship and protection whereby they may be promoted. The people are essentially Bulgarian, and they wish to remain so. They have no desire to be incorporated in Russia, or to form part of a great Slavonic Empire. Their aim is the preservation of the liberties they possess, and the complete liberation and the reunion of their nation, the bulk of which is now artificially divided into the three sections inhabiting the Principality of Bulgaria, Eastern Roumelia, and Macedonia.

The one Power which they hate and fear above all others is Austria. How far this may be due to the uniform unpopularity of Austrian rule, or to the antagonism between the Hungarians and Slaves, or to the fact of the Austrian Government being the protector and supporter of

the Roman Church, whose desire to maintain the subjection of the Orthodox Churches in the East has never been disguised, it is difficult to say. But they know that Austria desires to bring them under her rule, has been throughout one of the chief opponents to their freedom, and looks with an evil eye on the amount of liberty they have acquired. Some of the most unpopular acts of the European Commission in Eastern Roumelia are attributed to the influence of Austria, whose intrigues are supposed to have created many of the difficulties that embarrass the government of that Province. The Bulgarians of Macedonia, though they share these feelings against Austrian domination, would welcome even that as a means of escape from the intolerable conditions of their present existence. But since it has been realised that fresh disturbances would afford a pretext for Austrian interference, the Bulgarians in the Principality and in Eastern Roumelia have done their best to keep matters quiet in Macedonia, urging their countrymen to submit patiently to present evils rather than endanger the prospects of the ultimate reunion of their nation.

Towards France the disposition of the Bulgarians is very friendly. Her war with Austria in 1858, which is supposed to have exercised great influence over the Christian inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula, identified her with the cause of liberty and the rights of nationalities. Her interference in Syria on the occasion of the Maronite



massacres, the protection afforded by the French Consuls to the Christians, and no small amount of intrigues among them between the years 1858 and 1870, have led them to indulge a hope of French sympathies; and they know well that French ambition can involve no possible danger to their liberties. Up to the present time the protection of France has been accorded exclusively to Greek interests. Her desire to avoid embarrassing her relations with the other Powers of Europe has prevented her from seeking that influence with the Bulgarians which she might with little difficulty acquire.

Their feelings with regard to Russia are very intelligible. To the natural sympathy between the two nations, engendered by a community of race, language, and religion, must be added gratitude for the deliverance they owe to her, and for the complete national independence and unity which in the Treaty of San Stefano she sought to obtain for them. On the other hand, the democratic spirit innate in the people is opposed to the proceedings of an absolute Government like that of Russia. They would resist any attempt at annexation on her part; nor would they consent to be made the instruments of her policy. Unfortunately, they are compelled by the undisguised hostility of some European States, and the indifference of others, to rely on Russia alone for the maintenance of the partial independence secured to them, and for assistance towards its

complete development. They not only hate Austrian rule, but they fear it more than Turkish; for Austria is stronger than Turkey. They dread her aggression far more than that of Russia, whom they will continue to depend on till they can look to some other quarter for help.

They would willingly have looked to England, and courted her friendship in preference to that of any other Power. England is distant; she has no frontier conterminous with their own; from her they know that they need fear no aggression, nor any attempt at annexation. They would have welcomed English capital to develop their mineral and other resources, and would have been glad to find in English commerce a market for their produce. But the unvarying hostility displayed towards them by the English Government, the offensive tone of almost all its diplomatic agents, who have adopted and propagated every kind of report that could prejudice them before Europe, have convinced them that from England they can look for neither friendship nor protection; and they are at a loss to understand why they alone are refused the sympathy and support which England has invariably afforded to the cause of liberty in the case of other nations.

It is difficult to comprehend the motives that have influenced those who have directed English policy on the Eastern question since the termination of the late war. Lord Salisbury, in his despatch of July 13, 1878, took credit for the

large amount of territory restored to the Government of the Sultan, and for the independence secured to his empire at the Berlin Congress. Nothing in the treaty justified this statement. For, while the authority of the Sultan over Eastern Roumelia is little more than nominal, and, if the stipulations of the Berlin Congress and the organic statute drawn up by the European Commission be adhered to, can never be materially increased, the cession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria, the taking of Cyprus by England, and the claims which Greece is authorised to make on a part of Thessaly and Epirus, are in extent, in population, and in value, more than an equivalent for the reduction made in the Bulgaria of San Stefano. The rights secured to England to supervise reforms in Asiatic Turkey, and to all the Powers in the European provinces of Turkey and in the country inhabited by the Armenians, are alike fatal to the independence of the Empire.

If the restoration of Turkish power was considered hopeless, and English interests were held to demand a remedy for the consequent derangement of the balance of power in South-Eastern Europe, recourse might have been had to those nationalities in Turkey whose numbers were sufficiently large, and whose advance in civilisation and power of assimilation to European ideas gave proof of the possession of capacity for self-government; and an attempt might have been made

to constitute them into strong and important States, jealous of their independence, and ready to welcome the assistance they might derive from an English alliance in maintaining it. The Greeks and the Bulgarians would have fulfilled these conditions, and with a little support and encouragement might have become a barrier to any possible aggression of one or other of the great military empires.

Nothing of the kind was attempted. Greece gained only the right to demand a small addition of territory, a demand she has no means of enforcing. Of the Bulgarians, a part are left still under Turkish authority, while the remainder are divided between the independent Principality of Bulgaria and the semi-independent Province of Eastern Roumelia. Servia, instead of receiving ancient Servian territory where she would have been welcomed by a kindred population, received part of a Bulgarian province, as if it was intended to raise a spirit of jealousy and dissension between her and the new Principality. And the Montenegrins, cut off from a possible union with Servia, received Albanian territory where the national feelings of the population object to a Slave government, instead of a part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, inhabited by tribes hitherto in constant alliance with them.

Nor has the interest of peace, which it was the professed object of the Treaty of Berlin to secure, been really at all promoted. On the contrary,

the people are left discontented; and the respective rights and prerogatives of the different States are so ill defined as to tempt one to believe that the framers of the treaty desired to place matters on such a footing that any Power who might afterwards desire to disturb the arrangements agreed on should have every facility for doing so. The reservations to the Porte of the properties of the State and of the Vacouf lands in the territories ceded to the smaller States, and in the Principality of Bulgaria, afford a subject for endless disputes; while the share of the Turkish debt to be apportioned among them—a debt from the expenditure of which they have derived neither political nor industrial advantage—not only saddles them with a burthen which in their present exhausted condition they can ill afford to bear, but also weakens their independence, and forces them to become the clients of that Power which is most disposed to lessen the obligation imposed upon them. In Eastern Roumelia the prerogatives reserved to the Sultan are inconsistent with the freedom conceded to the population. There has been till lately constant excitement, an incessant struggle between the people, desirous of consolidating their liberties, and the Turks, who sought a pretext to re-enter with their army, and thereby to re-establish their former authority; nor can there be complete peace till either the Province has become entirely independent, or fresh massacres and the renewed oppression consequent on

the reimposition of Turkish tyranny have again crushed all spirit out of the people. To Greece has been conceded a right to a grievance, but nothing more; and she cannot but resort to arms, on the first occasion on which she may think success likely to attend her efforts. On Roumania and Servia conditions with respect to the admission of the Jews to the full rights of citizenship have been imposed so distasteful to the country that they can only be complied with, if complied with at all, by some arbitrary action of the Government, at variance with the constitutional rights enjoyed by the people; in fact, this stipulation has in Roumania been evaded, and in Servia practically ignored. The Porte has been left crippled, with her authority over the provinces under her direct rule impaired, yet, from the rights of interference secured to her, able to menace the newly liberated States. Those States, on the other hand, with their legitimate aspirations unsatisfied, are compelled, by the weakness of their position and by the ill-will displayed towards them by some of the Great Powers, to feel on how precarious a footing their independence is based, and are thus placed under inducements to devote to political intrigue, and to preparations for a future contest, resources that could otherwise be employed in developing their industry and in promoting their intellectual and material prosperity.

The Turks possess great diplomatic finesse

and a *vis inertiae* which no expostulations can move; and they are skilled in the art of evading compliance with demands it is not politic for them to refuse. But they are singularly deficient in real sagacity and foresight in respect either to their own internal administration or to the conduct of their relations with foreign Powers. After a war so fatal to their power and prestige, they would have done wisely to carry out all the conditions imposed on them, to settle all disputes, and to remove all causes of complaints, the reopening of which cannot fail to entail on them greater sacrifices hereafter. They ought to have appeased their own subjects, and avoided all differences with the smaller States, who, reassured as to their newly-acquired liberties and as to the position of their brethren, might thus have been induced to join in defending the independence of the whole peninsula against any one of the Great Powers. The Porte, however, has acted in a manner very different from this. For a long time it threatened Eastern Roumelia, and thereby kept the Bulgarians in a constant state of irritation. It has made no attempt to meet the Greek claims, but in order to resist them has collected on the Greek borders large bodies of troops, the transport and equipment of which drain the exhausted finances of the Empire. The soldiers without pay, food, or clothing increase the discontent of the peasantry, at whose expense they are maintained, and by their want of discipline

threaten to become a source of danger to the State.

The Berlin Congress, which secured neither a permanent peace, nor the integrity of the Sultan's dominions, nor the independence of the smaller States, nor the welfare of the people, whether Christian or Mussulman, has also found itself unable to enforce the execution of its own decrees. In two points they have been carried out to the letter. Russia has obtained both in Europe and in Asia all that it was stipulated she should receive, and in the evacuation of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia has complied with all the obligations she took upon her; but in few other instances have the provisions of the treaty been fully observed. The Albanians have been encouraged to wage a frontier war against Servia, and to resist the occupation by the Montenegrins of the territory ceded to them by the Treaty of Berlin, the stipulations of which have not yet been carried out. By Kurdish raids and pillaging on the part of the Circassians, the condition of both the Mussulman and Christian inhabitants in Asia Minor has become so intolerable as to have roused even the British Government from its lethargy. In Macedonia matters are still worse, though the efforts of those interested in keeping public opinion in the dark as to what is taking place in the East have prevented any account of the condition of that district being published in the newspapers. It is a field open to foreign



intrigue, and in a state that would justify the intervention of, or its occupation by, any European Power. Neither in the European nor Asiatic provinces of the Empire has any attempt been made to introduce the required reforms.

English diplomacy at Constantinople has meanwhile been occupied in low intrigue at the Porte and the palace, in support of one pasha in opposition to another. It has opposed the claims of the Greeks—claims based on the declarations of a treaty signed by England. It has made no secret of its hostility to the smaller States. If it has suggested reforms, it has not done so in the only terms which will be listened to by the Turks, who have looked on the despatches in which the suggestions were conveyed as intended for publication in the Blue Books to satisfy public opinion at home, rather than as serious declarations of English policy addressed to themselves. It has, in short, encouraged the fatal vanity of the Turks, and induced them to believe that the balance of power in the world lay subject to their decision, and that they might exercise their influence by extorting from the British Government the loan of a few millions to be divided among the intriguing pashas at the Porte and the parasites of the palace. When the impossibility of compliance with these demands became evident to them, they discarded all pretence of being governed by English advice. The English Government, irritated at the failure of its in-

trigues, and fearing the taunts that would be provoked on the part of political opponents, at last attempted to speak in the only fashion the Turks understand. If the action which at the end of 1879 was begun and abandoned in the feebleness of angry isolation, had been three years before begun and continued in the strength of a firm concert with the Powers of Europe, the war would have been avoided, and the political unity of the Sultan's dominions would not have been broken.

Both at Berlin and subsequent to the Congress there the English Government has acted in the interests of Austria, and of Austria alone. The division of Bulgaria, and the creation of the Province of Eastern Roumelia, separate and distinct from the Principality, though loudly celebrated as the triumph of English statesmanship at Berlin, was an Austrian stipulation, and was enforced on England by Austria as the condition of her joining the Congress. It was also part of Austria's requirements, that the division between the two States should follow the line of the Balkans from east to west, instead of descending south from the Danube. It is, moreover, to meet her views that the claims of Greece have been ignored, and the extensions given to Servia and Montenegro have been so niggardly. The maintenance of the capitulations in respect to foreign subjects in the smaller States is in the interest of Austria alone, she and Russia being the only

countries who have a large number of subjects under their protection, and Russia having already placed hers under the ordinary laws of the country. To Austria is given a power of interference which will enable her to exercise a real control over the railway system in the peninsula. And—what is most monstrous of all—while Montenegro and Servia in respect to the territories ceded to them, and the Principality of Bulgaria as part of the price of its freedom, are saddled with a proportionate share of the Turkish debt, no portion of that burden is imposed on Austria, who obtains the two important provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin have done much to increase the authority which a great military power like Austria can exercise over a small neighbouring State. Servia is prohibited from altering her commercial relations with other countries, except with their consent; and Austria, in order to dictate a commercial treaty on her own terms, has profited by this security from retaliation to increase, in some cases to more than double the previous amount, the duty on articles imported into the empire from Servia, on whom she is thus able to force a convention extremely favourable to her own commercial interests.

The Servians are heavily burdened by the obligations imposed on them to accept all the engagements contracted by the Porte towards

Austria-Hungary, and towards the company for working the railways of Turkey in Europe, for the completion and working of the railways to be constructed on the newly-acquired territory, and their connection with the Austrian railway system. Serbia is poor; till the late war, from the cost of which she has not yet freed herself, she had no national debt; and the security of the Prince's government and the stability of the state depend on the economy of the administration and the lightness of taxation. To construct the railway herself would add largely to her debt, while the guarantee that would be required by foreign capitalists, as an inducement to undertake the concession, would saddle her with a liability equally onerous. But so conscious are the Servians of the importance of opening out their country to Western commerce, and thus to some extent freeing themselves from the state of subjection under which they are held by Austria, that they would be disposed to make a very considerable effort to connect the Salonica and Mitrovitza line with Nisch, if the engagements of the Porte towards the Turkish railway company—that of Baron Hirsch—were not of so extraordinary a nature as to preclude the possibility of a return being received for the outlay within a reasonable time. The contract is that the Porte, for whom Serbia is now substituted in respect to her part of the line in question, is to construct certain railways; while

Baron Hirsch retains and works them free of any payment till the whole system is completed, but paying 8,000 francs per kilomètre after its completion. Thus, should Serbia at a heavy cost construct her portion of the railway, she would be debarred from receiving any income in return for the expenditure till Turkey, Eastern Roumelia, and Bulgaria had fulfilled similar engagements imposed on them also.

It is no secret that Austria seeks such an influence over the smaller States as would virtually incorporate them in her empire, and that her object is to obtain possession of Salonica, and ultimately of Constantinople. She desires to keep everything in confusion, so that there may be a constant pretext for her intervention, and to prevent the formation of any native power sufficiently strong to impede her forward movement. Had she advanced during the war she might have dictated her own terms, and would have been welcomed as putting an end to the state of anarchy and uncertainty then existing. Political difficulties at home prevented any such action on her part. It remains to be seen how far she will be able to deal with these difficulties hereafter, as well as with those which may be caused by the rising spirit of nationalities, and the hatred that her oscillating but aggressive policy has provoked from both Mussulmans and Christians.

There is force in the argument that it is con-

trary to the interests of England to allow Constantinople and the Balkan Peninsula to fall into the hands of one of the Great European Powers, and that it would have been incumbent on her to maintain the Ottoman Empire, if that had been the only effectual means of guarding against such a contingency. It is not desirable that those regions should become incorporated in Russia. Their acquisition by Austria relying on German support could not fail to be still more objectionable. They would thereby become part of a great military confederation, occupying the centre of Europe, and reaching from the German Ocean to the Mediterranean, far more powerful, and therefore more dangerous, than Russia can ever hope to become. If even it be contended that England has no concern in the political condition of the Turkish provinces, and that, relying on her insular position, she can with equanimity see one great military Power acquire a preponderating influence over Europe, still she has important commercial interests to maintain which cannot fail to be injured by Austrian supremacy in those regions. Austria seeks to include them within her narrow protective commercial system, to secure a monopoly for her manufactures, and to exclude all that can compete with her own. It is said that she requires Salonica as an outlet for her commerce; but little Austrian produce will ever find its way there, the routes by Trieste or the Danube being far more advantageous. She

desires to seize the city in order to prevent the entry of the commerce of England and the other Western nations, and their rivalry with her own in the countries she has already destined for her prey.

The Treaty of San Stefano had many faults. At Berlin all that was objectionable in it was re-enacted, while its best portion was neutralised. The Berlin Treaty, like the San Stefano one, destroys the Turkish power; but it makes no provision for a powerful and independent State, like the Bulgaria of San Stefano, to take any part of the vacant place. The final collapse of the Turkish Government may occur at any moment. The diplomatic movements which have disturbed Europe during the past few months seem due to an attempt to deal in anticipation with the fragments of the empire to be dissolved by that catastrophe. Most men who have watched the course of events believe that Austria will be able to occupy to some extent the position of the Porte in respect to its European provinces, but to occupy it for a time only.

The logic of events is wiser than the counsels of Ministers; and the will of nations is more powerful than the decision of congresses. A European combination may for a time check the development of the races that inhabit the Balkan peninsula; but sooner or later they must acquire both personal and national independence; and of all Powers Austria is not the one who by the

stability of her foreign relations, or by the cohesion of her parts, can be expected for any long time to oppose a successful resistance to serious national aspirations. The English Government has been for the last two years the dupe of the intrigues of Austria, and the instrument of her ambition. It remains to be seen whether Austria herself is not the dupe of a policy deeper than her own, and the destined victim of the ambition of a Power whose forces are far greater than any she can command.



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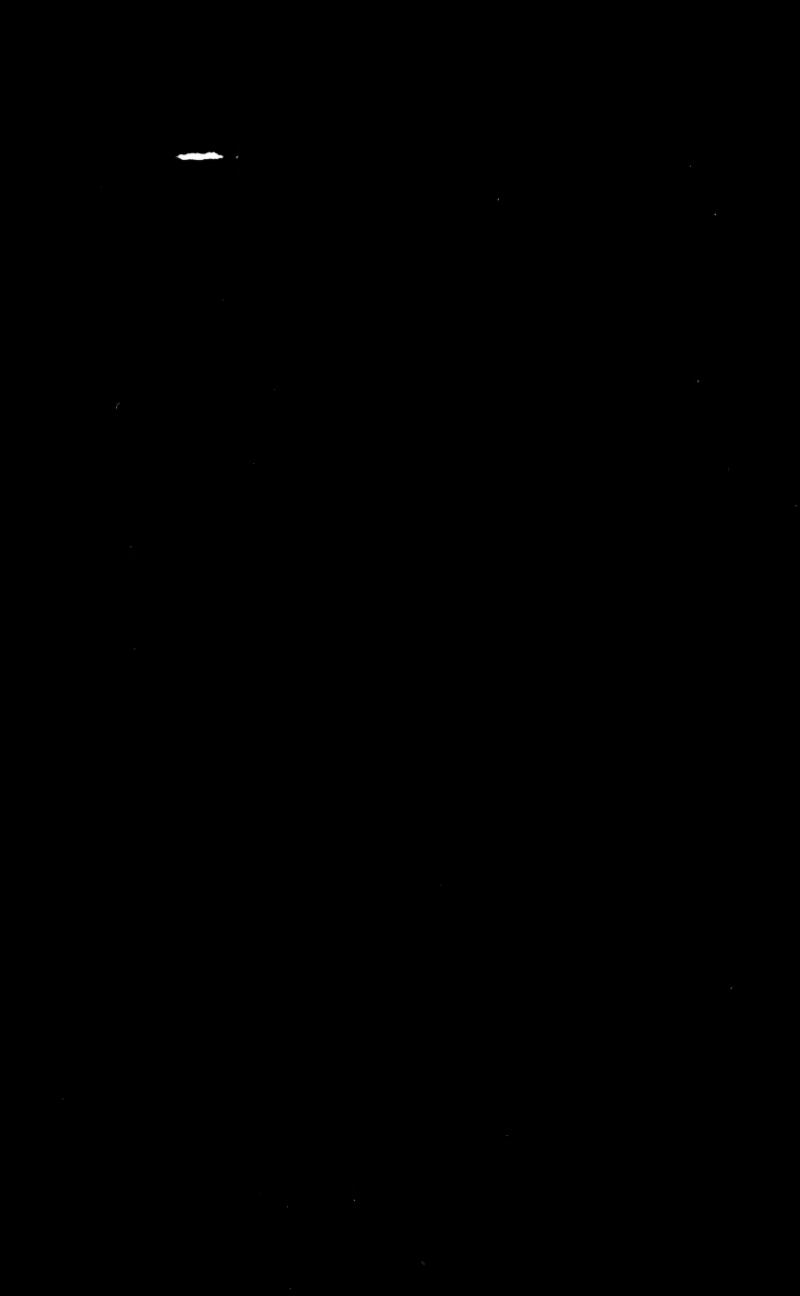
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